





**DOCUMENTS OF  
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT  
IN INDIA**



# DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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### **List of Abbreviations used :**

<b>CI</b>	<b>— The Communist International</b>
<b>ECCI</b>	<b>— The Executive Committee of the Communist International</b>
<b>CPI</b>	<b>— Communist Party of India</b>
<b>LM</b>	<b>— The Labour monthly published from London</b>
<b>CPGB</b>	<b>— Communist Party of Great Britain</b>
<b>CPC</b>	<b>— Communist Party of China</b>
<b>INPRECORR</b>	<b>— International Press Correspondence of the Communist International</b>
<b>BCI</b>	<b>— Bulletin of the Communist International</b>
<b>INC</b>	<b>— Indian National Congress</b>
<b>AITUC</b>	<b>— All India Trade Union Congress</b>
<b>AIWPP</b>	<b>— All India Workers' and Peasants' Party</b>



## Communist Resolution for Tripuri

# UNITY AND STRUGGLE

*R. D. Bharadwaj, Bankim Mukherji, Somnath Lahiri, N. Dutt Mazumdar, S. G. Sardesai, V. D. Chitale and other Communist members of the AICC have sent the following draft resolution :*

The Congress reiterates the inalienable right of the Indian people to complete national independence. The Congress declares that no constitution except one framed by the freely elected Constituent Assembly shall be accepted by the nation.

In spite of the unequivocal opposition of the nation, the Slave Constitution, as embodied in the Government of India Act, was inaugurated in April 1936. Imperialism is now preparing to impose on the nation the blackest part of the Act—the Federal Scheme. That national opposition to the Federation has not made Imperialism abandon the scheme is evident from the recent statements of the Viceroy and other responsible British statesmen.

At the same time, because of the rapidly developing crisis in the international arena and because of the growing power of the Congress, British Imperialism fears to precipitate conflict with the united national forces. Its present policy is therefore of (1) consolidating its international position by alliance with Fascist Powers, (2) making conciliatory gestures in order to win over a section of the national forces, split the Congress and weaken it, (3) extending the life of the present Central Legislature indefinitely, (4) encouraging communal and other disruptive forces.

Experience of the last two years has proved that without power at the Centre, without replacing the existing irresponsible and irresponsible Central Government by a Government elected by the people and responsible to them, it is not possible to fully implement the Congress Election programme. Repressive laws, like that against

sedition, continue on the Statute Book and are frequently being used in Non-Congress Provinces, the notorious Princes Protection Act is used to suppress agitation in British India against Princely misrule : the Army is requisitioned to suppress the States' people's movement : trade and industry are crippled by the continuation of the ruinous 18d ratio, an excessively large portion of the state income is spent for an expensive Army, thereby starving the Provinces and preventing them from undertaking ameliorative measures and nation-building activities

Even in the Provinces the bureaucracy, the Civil Services and the Police remain irremovable and outside effective control of the Ministries. The laws of the Central Government invest them with extraordinary powers as regards prohibition of political demonstrations and meetings, arrests, etc. Governor's assent to Progressive social measures is not given, sometimes for months, (Orissa Tenancy Bill, Frontier Teri Bill, etc.) the Upper Houses packed with representatives of reactionary vested interests, can delay the promulgation of all progressive laws

National resentment against the sham constitution which transfers no real power to the Indian people is increasing. The Congress has grown more powerful than ever, workers and peasants, even the most backward sections of them, have entered the political arena, have developed powerful organisations and have rallied in ever increasing numbers round the Congress.

In the States the tremendous awakening of the people has evoked the wrath of the Princes and their ally imperialism, and the popular movement for Responsible Government is being sought to be drowned in blood. Imperialist intervention against the States people and in favour of the Princes is increasing. In spite of the ruthless repression the popular movement is gaining strength, artificial barriers are breaking down. The States' people have entered the political arena as a mighty force, a detachment of the national Army.

In view of the tremendous strength that the popular forces have attained, in view of the present international situation and in view of the continued defiance of the popular will by British Imperialism, The congress feels that the time is ripe for passing on to the

offensive. The imperialist policy of preparing the ground for federation can be defeated only by uniting the entire national forces—workers, peasants, states' people and all freedom loving Indians for a forward move for an all-round attack on the slave constitution as a whole.

The Congress, therefore, reiterates the national demands for complete independence, immediate withdrawal of the Army of Occupation, complete control over Defence, Foreign Affairs and Finance by the Indian people. The Congress calls upon the British Government to concede these demands immediately and in their entirety.

In case of non-acceptance of these demands within six months the Working committee shall review the situation as it exists then and shall take whatever steps are necessary to enforce the people's will.

With the object of preparing the country for mass struggle on a national scale and for mobilising the entire people for active participation in the battle for independence the Congress adopts the following Plan of Actions :—

(a) Intensive campaign throughout the country against the Federal Scheme, against the existing autocratic Central Government, against the limitations imposed on Provincial Governments under the Government of India Act, against the entire slave Constitution.

(b) Extensive popularisation of the demand for the Constituent Assembly as expressing the sovereign right of the Indian people to self-determination.

(c) Incorporation of the basic demands of the toiling masses in concrete and specific form in the Congress programme.

(d) Elimination of corruption from Congress ranks by strict supervision of membership rolls, by vigorous functioning of the Congress Committees and by ensuring active participation of the rank and file in the work of the Congress.

(e) Creation of an All-India Volunteer Corps of at least a million members as the nucleus of the national militia; arrangement for political and technical training of the Congress workers.

(f) Rapid implementation of the Election Programme by the Congress Ministries with regard to social legislation and establishment of democratic liberties.

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**(g) Establishment of close United Front relations between the Congress and the workers and peasants organisations : active support by the Congress to workers and peasants in their struggle for economic and democratic demands.**

**(h) Unity with communal minorities especially Muslims and untouchables through appeal for joint struggles, through negotiations with their organisations and through direct work among the masses of the minority communities, granting of all minority demands consistent with basic principles of national unity.**

**(i) Formation of Coalition Ministries wherever possible on the basis of the Congress Election programme.**

**(j) Co-ordination of the States people's struggles and developing them as an integral part of the national liberation movement, through a Committee appointed by the Congress. Formation of Congress Committees, in the States to conduct the States people's movement for Responsible Government and Civil Liberties. Adoption of a Charter of Demands of the States people defining Responsible Government and mobilisation of mass support throughout the country in its favour. Solidarity demonstrations and organisation of relief for the States people in British India.**

## **INDIAN WORKERS' GREAT ONE-DAY STRIKE**

**Ben Bradley**

The most important event in India of recent times was the tremendous one-day strike against the Bombay Trades Dispute Bill. In Bombay alone, on less than two hundred thousand workers of all trades came out on the streets in strike action, in order to demonstrate their emphatic opposition to a measure which is calculated to severely curtail their liberty of action.

The original text of the Bill as brought forward by the Bombay Congress Ministry early in March last, opened by stating that it was to aid in the "prevention of strikes and lock-outs and to promote amicable settlement of Trades Disputes in factories and other industrial establishments." Even a glance at the original text of the Bill shows that its main purpose and trend was to restrict the freedom of trade union movement, and render direct action of the workers almost impossible. The main title of the Bill disclosed its purpose, to prevent strikes and lock-outs.

As soon as the original text of the Bill was made public, the Trade Union leaders in India expressed their unanimous condemnation, and at a mass meeting of workers held on Kamgar Maidan, Bombay, on March 7, Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the Indian National Congress, also expressed his dissatisfaction with the measure.

It was recognised on all sides that the pressing through of such a measure could only have extremely serious repercussions in relation to the United National Front in India. The Ministries of the seven Provinces where there are Congress majorities, are bound by the pledges which outline the National Congress policy towards working-class legislation. The Election Manifesto of the Congress fully understood the democratic character of the economic struggle of the masses. It assured the workers the right to strike and organise, it promised freedom for the Trade Union Movement, and

also declared that the Congress would establish conciliation machinery for settlement of industrial disputes.

The Legislative Assemblies with Congress Ministries has acquired an important significance for the working-class. The Congress Ministries are under mandate to pass measures extending democratic rights and liberties, to remove bureaucratic restrictions, thus enabling the workers and peasants to organise and struggle for better economic conditions. It is with these facts in mind that we consider the Bill which roused the opposition of the Indian working-class movement.

One of the most objectionable features of the original text runs as follows :

III. Any Union may apply to the Registrar for registration as a recognised Union. On receipt of such application for registration, the Registrar shall forward a copy of the application to the employer or employers concerned, and on receipt of a communication from such employer or employers to the effect that the Union has received recognition from them the Registrar shall proceed to register such union as a recognised Union

This clause would mean that no union would be registered unless the said Union satisfied the employers

We will not go into detail in connection with the original text, because when the Draft Bill was published in the Government Gazette and presented to the Bombay Provincial Legislative Assembly six months later, on July 30, it had been considerably amended. Presumably, the vigorous opposition created as a result of the publication of the original text caused the sponsors of the Bill to make these alterations.

For example, it is very significant that the opening statement was altered from "aid in the prevention of strikes, etc." to "make provision for the promotion of peaceful and amicable settlement of industrial disputes by conciliation and arbitration and for certain other purposes." Further, the clause referred to earlier in connection with submitting an application for registration to the employers first, does not appear in the published Draft of the Bill.

Even with the drastic alterations made in the wording between the first and second Drafts of the Bill, still the Bill as submitted remained most objectionable. Ignoring the protests of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress, the new Draft embodied the



same principles which had evoked the protests. The most vicious aspect of the Bill was that it would take away from the worker the only effective weapon he has—the right to strike.

The Trades Disputes Act (1929) of the Government of India, which evoked so much protest, prevents lightning strike by prescribing a month's notice in public utility service. The present Bill not only demands a notice of strike, but makes every strikes which takes place before the conciliatory proceedings are over illegal, but the notice provision, together with the conciliatory proceedings, would make strikes impossible for a period of between three to five months—thus strike action would be paralysed under this Bill.

The original draft blatantly announced its preference for arbitration and company Unions. The new proposals are intended to do the same with equal effectiveness. Militant unions, disfavoured by the owners, are effectively shut off from representing the workers, or entering into collective agreements before the Conciliation Court. Under Section 7 of the Bill any recognised Union with not less than five per cent. membership of the total number of employees will be declared a Registered Union under the Act. A Registered Union secures the right of representing the workers under certain conditions in the Conciliation Court. The Bill does not lay down any provision regarding recognition. There is no obligation on the owners to recognise a genuinely representative union. The question is left to the sweet will of the owners who are notorious for their hostility to any independent union. The provision, therefore, is a direct incitement to start company unions or recognise anti-working-class ones and secure them the right of representation before the Conciliation Court.

The same section provides that where a Union is not recognised it must show 50 per cent membership of the total employed before it is registered, i.e., before it can claim to recognise the workers in a Court of Conciliation. Anyone conversant with the Trade Union Movement knows that very few Unions can boast of consistent 50 per cent membership. This provision therefore threatens the existence of free Trade Unions.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a permanent tribunal for Arbitration—the Industrial Court—and contemplates making arbitration more and more the dominant method of settling disputes.

The Conciliation proceedings are to last for a period of three to five months—no strikes can take place during this period.

The owners, however have been allowed a number of exceptions. They can lock-out their employees in a period of industrial depression. No notice is necessary. The workers cannot take the dispute to the Conciliation Court. Notice is required only for lock-out arising out of a trade dispute. Schedule II of the Bill allows the owners to reduce the number of employees on the plea "that the character or volume of production has changed." Thus under the plea of temporary depression the owner can dismiss any number without notice, without conciliation proceedings. The change will become operative immediately. The workers are not allowed to give an immediate reply to this sudden change. Section 62 (b) (a) (c) makes it illegal to strike before the conciliation proceedings are over, that is, for a period of three to five months. In the meanwhile the change will continue to be in operation. This is nothing but a legal provision to break the solidarity of the workers. The Bill makes conciliatory proceedings absolutely binding on the workers but not on the owners.

This same attempt to load the workers with heavy restrictions is seen in other provisions. Owners may lock-out their factories without notice by pleading industrial depression. But workers cannot strike for the whole period of conciliation, when prices are rising. World conditions exempt owners from the operation of the Act, but not the workers.

This partiality for the owners is notoriously seen in Section 28. That Section makes it incumbent on workers to give notice of every change that is desired. But the clause binding the owners to give notice conveniently omits the question of wages. One is apt to treat this as an oversight. But the precise way in which the workers' responsibilities are mentioned, makes one believe that the omission is deliberate. Anyway, the Bill as it stands does not require any notice or conciliation proceedings when the owners want to reduce wages. At the same time it compels workers to resort to conciliation whenever a change is desired. No comment is necessary on this provision which so shamelessly favours the owners. There are a number of such provisions which directly or indirectly allow the owners to make changes and simultaneously deprive the workers of the right to resist immediately.

Under Section 62, every strike, whether before or after conciliation proceedings, against the standing orders of the management, is rendered illegal for a period of one year. So far as the standing orders are concerned the right to strike is abolished for a year. So far as other matters are concerned no strike can be declared or commenced till after the conciliation proceedings are over. Workers cannot declare a strike only for the reason that the employer has not carried out provision of any standing order and has made an illegal change. The provision here is absolute. This is followed by another provision which restricts the right still further. After conciliation proceedings a strike to be legal must be commenced within two months after the expiry of the conciliation proceedings. Thus in various ways the right to direct action is so narrowed down that the freedom to strike is given only for two months after expiry of conciliation proceedings.

The new Bill enhances the penalties for illegal strikes. The original draft prescribed a fine equal to one day's wage for every day of the illegal strike. The present proposals prescribe a penalty of six month's imprisonment or fine, or both. The same penalties are prescribed for instigation. The Trade Disputes Act of the Central Government prescribes three month's imprisonment for illegal strikes. The Bombay Ministry intends to outbid the Central Government in legislative tyranny.

Strike is the only effective weapon of struggle in the last resort. In the final stage it is the normal form of industrial unrest, the most common form of worker's resistance. On the other hand, the owner's counter offensive does not normally take the form of lock-out. It takes the form of strike-breaking. Lock-out, as a method of intimidating the workers, is rarely used. In the nature of things it cannot be used as a normal weapon of counter-offensive. By putting strikes and lock-outs in the same category the Bill penalises the only weapon of the workers.

The Bombay Provincial Trade union Congress made every effort to meet the Congress Ministers in order to discuss their objections to the Bill and to endeavour to get them to retrace their steps. The Bill was opposed in the Legislative Assembly by representatives of the Trade Union Movement, but the Congress Government persisted in pressing through this measure.

At huge worker's rallies all over India, workers voiced their protests against this reactionary Bill.

On October 16 the Bombay workers, under the leadership of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress, decided to organise a one-day Protest Strike to demonstrate against this unwanted Bill, and to demand its withdrawal. The Congress Socialist Party opposed this plan of the B.P.T.U.C. to rally the workers against this measure and in defence of their trade union rights.

As November 7 drew near the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee mobilised all its resources in an endeavour to counter the call of the B.P.T.U.C. for the one-day Protest Strike. Motor lorries fitted with loud speakers went around the working-class areas calling upon the workers not to strike : meetings were arranged for front-rank Congress leaders, but the poor attendances at these meetings showed, as the Bombay Sentinel, a Nationalist evening daily, stated on November 2, that even all this " has not cut much ice among the mill workers. The strike will come off as planned by the Labour leaders and the demonstration promises to be a very imposing one."

A last-minute effort was made by Labour leaders to prevail upon the Congress Ministry to postpone the further consideration of the Bill and discuss its provisions at a Joint Conference with labour representatives. This was rejected.

November 7, 1938, came, and it will go down in the history of the Indian working-class movement as one of the greatest demonstrations of the working-class in defence of trade union rights. No less than 200,000 workers of all trades came out on the streets of Bombay alone. Only 6 out of a total of 69 textile mills of Bombay worked partially during the day shift. In not one Mill did the night shift workers turn up. The Municipal Workshops closed down. The scavengers joined the protest strike. At Kurla, a suburb of Bombay, 3,000 workers downed tools. Five thousand tannery workers of Dharavi joined up. The overwhelming majority of the building workers, 5,000 domestic servants, compositors and machine-men of many presses in Girgaum, including those employed at the press of Patil (The Secretary of the Bombay Congress Committee), all the gold, silver and brass workers in Bhulshwar and Mandvi participated in the strike.

"For the first time in the history of this great industrial city

which has backed the Congress to its utmost power and strength in all its trials and vicissitudes, the word of the Congress failed in a most dismal manner." (Bombay Sentinel, November 7, 1938).

Never had Bombay seen such a complete and spontaneous strike. Never had the unity of the working-class been demonstrated in such a striking manner. It was the most important mass demonstration of workers since the great strike movements of 1928-29.

*The rally at the Kamgar Maidan was attended by over one hundred thousand strikers. This vast gathering passed the resolution condemning the Labour Bill without a single dissentient voice.*

It was not in Bombay alone that the proletariat struck. At Ahmedabad, the fortress of Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, 10,000 workers of 12 mills came out on strike. This in spite of the utmost efforts made by the Majoor Mahajan (Ahmedabad Labour Association), in spite of the orders issued by the police practically prohibiting processions.

At Sholapur, the Juni Mill workers were the first to down tools. The workers came out en bloc and formed a procession of 8,000 led by Meenakshi Sardesai. This was the signal for the workers of other mills. By noon, 80 per cent. of the workers were out on the streets. All the women workers in Bidi factories joined the strike.

At Amalner, Dhulia and Chalisgaon, the strike was a complete success. Scores of presses had to close down at Poona.

The working-class, as far away as Calcutta, Cawnpore and Madras also demonstrated their solidarity and support to the magnificent stand the Bombay workers were making.

In Bombay City early in the morning of November 7, lorry loads of armed police invaded the working-class locality. Trade Union leaders toured the locality in a lorry with a loud speaker calling the workers to strike action. Despite all Congress efforts to frustrate the strike, it was a tremendous success. An eye witness, writing in National Front, describes a scene as follows :

Deafening noise was coming through the window. I looked out of the window and found tram-cars packed with working class youth and children. They had hoisted up the red flag on the cars or waved them through the windows, lustily singing revolutionary songs and shouting slogans of triumph. We had only one lorry to

do propaganda for the strike. but the boys managed to celebrate the victory from every tramcar or bus that passed through Parel. Not one passenger was hurt or molested. Tram conductors let them in without hindrance. The broad grin of the police constables showed that the thrill of a most successful struggle has seized them too.

I went round among the knots of elderly workers. The holiday mood of the morning was no more there. They looked grim and thoughtful. Uppermost in their mind was "A Black Bill . . . the same lathis . . . . . Bullets too . . . . . all this under a Congress Ministry . . . what to make of the Congress now. . . ."

The police had opened fire on three occasions and there had been lathi charges. A number of workers were shot, two workers died as a result of the shooting—Bhairoo Chavan and Bhagaji Waghmare add their names to the long list of workers who have made the greatest sacrifice in defence of working-class rights.

Interested elements who were desirous of splitting the united front of the Indian people tried to utilise the strike to drive a wedge between the working-class and the Indian National Congress. The Times of India, the mouthpiece of the British Government, stated on the eve of the strike : "It is a trial of strength between the Congress and the labour leaders." This, however was far from being the case, the working-class of Bombay have a long record of struggle under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, the strike was not under the leadership of anti-Congress elements.

In order to show that workers understood what they were struggling for, we will quote the most influential working-class paper in Bombay, **National Front** :

The smashing victory of the strike is not a victory against the Congress. It is a victory for working class unity, a victory of the same principles fighting for which the Congress has grown, and therefore a victory for the Congress in the truest sense of the word. The fact that Dr. Ambedkar supported the strike, the fact that Sjt. Jamnadas Mehta is the President of the B.P.T.U.C. cannot detract from the essential character of the protest strike. It was a victory over those who in the interest of enemies of the people seek to divide the popular forces, who disrupt the unity of the Congress by their attacks on the working class.

The 7th November strike was the greatest independent political action by the proletariat of this country. It shall prepare the proletariat

for future actions on an even vaster scale. The unity of the working class movement achieved at Nagpur will be further cemented and strengthened by this first great united action under the leadership of the united TUC for the defence of democratic rights of organisation and action.

The strike is of national significance. The workers downed tools in protest against a measure initiated by the Congress Ministry.

The blood of workers flowed on the streets of Bombay on November 7th because the Congress Ministry remained deaf to all appeals, refused to listen to the demand made by the AITUC, representing over three hundred thousand organised workers.

The strike must act as the unifier of the national forces. The suicidal ministerial policy of concessions to vested interests and upholding police firing in the name of non-violence must be reversed. Adherence to Truth demands admission of the overwhelming success of the strike. The Black Bill whose condemnation the working class has written with its blood must be withdrawn. The unity of the people which has been achieved under the banner of the Congress must not be allowed to be disrupted.

Dr. Suresh Banerji, President of the AITUC, has, according to latest information, been discussing the proposal for a Conference between the Bombay provincial Trade Union Congress and the Congress Ministries, with Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders of the Congress. The workers are concerned with the unity of the nation as a whole; they seek to rehabilitate the cordial relations that must exist between the Indian National Congress and the Trade Union Congress if India's battle for freedom is to succeed.

Jawaharlal Nehru can play an important role in connection with this situation. While in England he was conscious of the growing rift between the Ministerial conciliators on the one hand and the growing force of the labour and kisan struggle on the other. He indicated this in an article he wrote in the Labour Monthly in August last year. All left Congressmen, labour and kisan workers, Socialists and Communists, will look to Jawaharlal Nehru to give a lead to stop the drift towards compromise. The most effective way to do this and to save unity would be first to consolidate all these forces in the form of a determined bloc as the basis for achieving the broader unity of the Indian people for the struggle against the Federation.

*Chinese Communist Party*

## **SALUTES PEOPLE OF INDIA**

*The following letter of greetings was received from the Chinese Communist Party and read out in the Open Session of the Congress at Tripuri :*

The Communist Party of China through its Central Committee sends brotherly greetings to Indian National Congress which meets on March 10, 1939. Indians and Chinese are the two great peoples of Asia. Both are oppressed by Imperialism. The people of India for more than half a century have been carrying on a struggle to gain national independence and to emancipate a population of three hundred millions.

We firmly believe in your final success as we believe in our own victory over the Japanese aggressors. The unity expressed in your National Congress is the only way which you can achieve victory over Imperialism.

Your National Congress is rallying the forces of all social classes and of all the political parties of India to form an All India National United Front which is the most important stepping stone. The Chinese are united in their war against the savagery of Japanese Imperialism in the name of the entire people of China. We thank you for all your sympathy and assistance. The first medical unit sent by your Congress is now with the 8th Route Army. This is the concrete proof that the people of India are deeply in sympathy with the Chinese National Revolutionary vanguard. Success to your National Congress and long live the people of India.



*British Communists*

## GREET INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress met under the shadow of a constitutional crisis, as a result of the unwarranted interference of the Governors in the functions of the Congress Ministers of Behar and the United Provinces. It was the united stand of the Indian People at this time under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, which forced the Governor General to recognise that the Congress Ministers would brook no interference in their duties under the Constitution.

### All-round development

Since the Haripura Session there has been a decisive growth in the movement of mass struggle among the peasantry. Also during the past twelve months the economic struggle of the industrial workers reached one of its highest points since 1928-29. *This development of the struggle of workers and peasants provides the guarantee of strength for the Congress in its fight against the Federation and for Indian freedom.* What is perhaps most important is the general movement among the people in the Indian states demanding democratic rights and civil liberties. We are glad to see that the Congress is giving its whole-hearted support to this movement. The movement for democratic rights in the Indian States is closely bound up with the fight against the Federation.

### Fascist menace

During recent years the Indian National Congress has made great strides. We feel an organisation with 5,000,000 members, leading the fight of the great Indian people for liberation has an important role to play not only in India but also in relation to the present world situation. The National Congress has

taken its stand clearly on the issues of Spain and China, against Fascism and in defence of democracy and peace. This is most important, it has realised that the struggle for liberation of the Indian people is intimately linked up with the forces of progress and democracy in their fight to stem the advance of reaction and Fascism.

*The threat of Fascism does not only menace the people in democratic countries but also provides a real menace for people in subject countries.* Hitler's and Mussolini's demands for colonies are accompanied by serious attempts to take advantage of the feelings of the colonial peoples resulting from years of oppression and their hatred of imperialism. Agents of Fascism are active in all the colonial countries, Palestine and the Arab countries, South, North and West Africa, South America, etc. Centres are set up in the fascist countries in order to train colonial people to carry the teachings of Fascism back to their countries.

Fascism thus poses as the friend of liberty in order to extend its murderous sway over peoples and lands now engaged in struggles for National independence and liberty. But the record of Fascism itself, its racial theories, its mass murders in Abyssinia, Spain and China, and its imperialist ambitions and alliances exposes this pretence as a sham and should leave our comrades in colonial and semi-colonial countries in no doubt as to its real motives and character.

*In India, the Congress has unequivocally declared its opposition to Fascism and its firm resolve to co-operate with the progressive forces of the world for peace and democracy.* The Congress has also dissociated the Indian people from the fascist and pro-fascist policies and actions of the British National Government. The struggle of the Indian people against Imperialist oppression has begun to be increasingly and consciously recognised as part of the common struggle of the peoples of the world for democracy and peace and against imperialism, Fascism and war, which must be waged by all of us unremittingly, with determination and with unity.

## **Call for Unity**

*In this situation, the greatest need, obviously, is unity of all the forces making for national liberation. The Indian National Congress today carries the tremendous responsibility to lead this struggle. Recognising the fact that this is bound up with the worldwide movement against reaction, we clearly appreciate the tremendously important role that the Indian people can play freed from British Imperialism, alongside the democratic and progressive people throughout the world, to bring victory over the black forces of reaction which are bringing us to the verge of a new world war.*

As we in this country, call for the unity of all labour and democratic forces, so at this urgent moment, the question of paramount importance in India in our view is the unity of all national forces under the leadership of the Indian National Congress.

*In sending our greetings, we once again pledge our support to the Indian National Congress in its fight against Imperialism and for the complete independence of India.*

yours fraternally,

Harry Pollitt

For the Central Committee  
Communist Party of Britain

## TRIPURI MUST SOUND THE WAR DRUM

The re-election of Subhash Chandra Bose as the president of the National Congress has created a grave and critical situation. Never before in the history of the National Congress was the Presidential election fought round burning political issues. The controversy which raged just on the eve of the election revealed sharp differences inside the Working Committee which were expressed with a considerable amount of bitterness. Immediately after Subhash's victory came the sensational news of the resignation of the seven leading members of the Working Committee, who had issued a statement opposing Bose's re-election. This was promptly contradicted. But on the heels of this denial came Gandhi's article which interpreted Bose's election as a defeat for his principles and policy and foreshadowed the resignation of the present Working Committee members by asking Bose to choose a "Homogeneous Cabinet". Political speculation is rife in the daily press. How will this conflict between the Right and Left develop? Who will win at Tripuri? Will there be a split? This is how the question is posed. Imperialist press is of course gloating over the prospect "A compromise is regarded as a remote possibility", says the Times of India. "unless something unexpected happens during the next four weeks and preparations are going on for a straight fight" (4-2-39).

All this is happening against the background of a serious and menacing international situation. If the rapid advance of Franco leads to the collapse of Republican Spain, Europe would be in the throes of an acute war crisis in two months' time. British Imperialism, in spite of its successive "appeasing" surrenders to the fascist powers, is being driven into a position in which it is menaced more than ever. Today more than ever British Imperialism is vulnerable. *If we hit out now, we win. An all round people's offensive is the need of the hour. But this demands unity, unity of National leadership, unity of the Congress, unity of the entire people for*

*a decisive struggle. To achieve this unity at Tripuri is the supreme task before us. Our enemies expect hattle royal at Tripuri. It is wishful thinking. They want the Congress to crack through the pressure of inner conflict. It will facilitate their task of foisting the Federation on India. The Viceroy has recently told us how urgent it is in view of the advance of the totalitarian attack ! We have to foil this game. We have to evolve unity out of this very conflict which has arisen. This necessitates an analysis of issues around which the controversy raged.*

### **Issues in the Presidential Controversy**

Two issues came up in the controversy. One was political and the other organisational. The political issue was about the struggle against the Federation. Haripura had decided to combat the Federal scheme with all the means at the disposal of the nation. The line of the Working Committee in implementing this resolution has been to wait and drift till Federation was actually on the point of being enforced. In the meanwhile the "experiment of office acceptance" was to go on. The Right wing visualised a sort of a constitutional crisis at the time of the Federal elections leading towards a settlement resulting in modifications in the Federal scheme which would make it worthwhile trying the "experiment of office acceptance" at the centre as well. For instance Babu Rajendra Prasad who charged Subhash Bose of cooking "imaginary differences" on the issue of Federation visualises the fight against the Federation: thus :—

"What steps this non-co-operation (against Federation) would take, whether there would be non-co-operation even at the stage of Federal elections or at the stage of acceptance of office after election, was a matter of detail and tactics which would be decided on the exigencies of the situation then existing."

(Bombay Chronicle ; 28-1-39)

Subhash Babu on the other hand, in a series of statements which he published in December last, had clearly indicated an alternative course. The most effective way of fighting the Federation according to him was to take initiative now, to give an ultimatum to Imperialism at Tripuri and launch an offensive without waiting for the Federation.

### **Bose and the Seven**

Thus, while there is a general agreement on the issue of fighting the Federation on the basis of the Haripura resolution there is

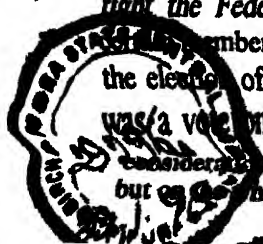
difference in tactics to be employed to implement it. This divergence in tactics however makes all the difference. The policy of wait and drift, when read in conjunction with the outspoken statements of Satyamurti and Bhulabhai can only mean compromise and the acceptance of the Federation. Subhash Babu warned against this tendency and made a fight against it, an issue in the controversy which preceded his election. He stated :—

“It is widely believed that there is a prospect of a compromise on the Federal scheme between the Right wing of the Congress and the British Government during the coming year. Consequently the Right wing do not want a leftist President who may be a thorn in the way of a compromise and may put obstacles in the path of negotiation.....It is imperative in these circumstances to have a President who will be an anti-Federationist to the core of his heart.”

While Sjt. Bose took his stand on the anti-federation struggle and on his plan of action the seven Right wing leaders who opposed Bose tried to make out as if there were no differences at all on that political issue. They opposed his election on formal grounds—“Re-election was only resorted to, in exceptional circumstances. Presidential election should be unanimous.” Bose was accused of setting up new precedents by forcing a contest. They did not want the presidential election to be made the issue of a political vote. They wanted the president to be like the “speaker” in the parliament, who is supposed to be above party-politics. This raised an organisational issue, Subhash protested against the efforts of the seven members of the Working Committee in bringing pressure upon Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw from the contest. He protested against their attempts to influence the democratic vote of the delegates.

### Vote For Bose—A Vote for Struggle

Thus there were two issues before the delegates when they went to the polls on the 29th January : (1) A militant plan of action to fight the Federation, and (2) the bureaucratic manipulation of the members of the Working Committee who wanted to prevent the election of a leftist President. The majority vote for Subhash was a vote on both these points. Personal as well as provincial considerations might have swayed a certain section of the voters, but on the whole it was a political vote. It was a vote for a militant



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policy in fighting the Fédération. It was a rank and file vote against bureaucratic manipulation of certain Working Committee members. It was a vote for a democratic functioning of the Congress. The majority vote cast in favour of Subhash gets added significance because of the following factors : (1) Seven leading members of the Working Committee had deprecated Subhash's candidature and the raising of political issues in the presidential election (2) Rajendra Babu had criticised Subhash's views on Federation stating that they were "not crystallised enough". (3) Jawaharlal Nehru had, in a sense supported the contention of the Right wingers that the issue of the Federation was irrelevant as there was no difference among Congressmen on that score. (4) Gandhiji had not spoken, but the fact that he had not prevailed upon Dr. Pattabhi to withdraw in favour of Subhash and thus avoid a contest was a pointer in itself. That the delegates voted for Subhash in spite of these factors shows clearly that the vote is a definite indication of a swing towards the left. It reflects the militant mood of the Congress rank and file whom the delegates represent and consequently the growing will of the people to fight. Masses are on the move fighting against every form of oppression in the States and in the British provinces. The realisation of the weakness of Imperialism is dawning upon the people. The dissatisfaction with the Congress Ministries is growing. These factors have swayed the vote.

### **Gandhiji's Warning Finger**

Can we therefore say that it was a 100% left vote ? Can we celebrate it as a left victory ? We cannot and must not. It is not a vote against the present leadership; nor can it be interpreted as a vote for an alternative leadership. They have voted for militant action and a democratic functioning. They want the present leadership to implement their verdict. Gandhiji knows the weakness of this majority. A considerable section of it has implicit faith in Gandhiji. His sensational statement after Subhash's victory is aimed at them :—

"Since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate when Maulana Sahib had retired, the defeat is more mine than his. I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand."

Gandhiji points his warning finger to the rank and file delegate who has voted for Subhash and says—In voting for Subhash you have voted against me. To Subhash he says, you have won. Form your own “homogeneous Cabinet” and carry out your programme. You think yours is “the most forward and boldest policy and programme.” Carry it out. You have my blessings. But I am afraid “the minority if it cannot keep pace with it must come out of the Congress” and the ministries too may have to resign if you make “changes in the parliamentary programme as fixed by the erstwhile majority.”

### **Subhash's Plea for Unity**

Gandhiji's statement opens up a disastrous perspective. It is a challenge to unity as well as democracy within the Congress. If every time a minority whose views are rejected were to take the course of non-co-operation no united and democratic functioning would ever be possible. It is an open encouragement to the right wing leaders of the working committee, to non-co-operate with Subhash it is a provocation to the Left to accept the challenge of an all-left Working Committee. A left conference has just concluded its informal deliberations at Calcutta. It is rumoured that conference of the Right-wing leaders is to meet in Wardha. Is it a preparation for a battle royal at Tripuri and a split ? Only a splitter, an enemy of the people, can wish for such a culmination. It is the duty of the Left—especially of the Socialists and Communists to rise equal to the occasion and find out of this situation the path for unity in common fight. Sjt. Subhash Bose in his reply to Gandhiji has taken the correct line :—

“Assuming for argument's sake that the result implies a victory of the left, we should stop to consider what the Leftist's programme is. For the immediate future the leftists stand for National unity and on unrelenting opposition to the Federal Scheme. In addition to this, they stand for democratic principles. The Leftists will not take the responsibility of creating a split within the Congress ; if a split does come it will come about not because of them but in spite of them.”

(Times of India 4-2-39).

### **Wanted a United War Council**

How do we proceed to implement this line concretely ? The issue before the country is not whether we have a “right” or a left “Cabinet”. The Congress is not a parliament. The nation has more



urgent tasks to face than play the game of the Cabinet and the Opposition—however benevolent. The Congress has been and is a fighting organisation. It has to be far more so in the future. Each one of its decisions is a decision for the fight for freedom. It needs a united leadership and a United Congress to lead a united people. We have to talk not in terms of a Cabinet but of a war council and a general staff. Decisions democratically arrived at have to be carried out with a military discipline by all in equal measure. There cannot be any standing aside in this grave hour. In order to achieve unity of action and leadership we have to concentrate on achieving an all-round agreement on the plan of action which we have to adopt at Tripuri. Let the left with Subhash and Jawahar at the head take the initiative in drafting the main omnibus resolution for Tripuri. Let it be placed before the country for discussion. Let it be deliberated upon by the Working Committee. Let there be a maximum give and take so that a united resolution laying down a concrete plan of fight against the Federation results. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Bose have to take joint initiative in this matter. They alone can perform the task, in the present situation, of achieving unity between the Right wing of the Congress on the one hand and the Left, the labour and Kisan forces on the other, on the basis of a common plan of fight. This has to be achieved before Tripuri so that the president elect and the Working Committee are able to come before the A.I.C.C. with an agreed and a fighting resolution.

### **Agreed Plan of Action Possible**

The central question therefore is whether an agreed plan of fight is possible. As pointed out in the beginning of the article we have to deal with two opposing lines.

The line of the present working committee has been "Wait and watch till the Federation comes and drift in the meanwhile. On the issue of ministries the guiding principle has been, follow the line of least resistance, no embarrassing demonstrations, and minimum violence 'to maintain' non-violent atmosphere" On the issue of the States the line in practice has come to individual aggressive and to an actual struggle of the States people.

The alternative line of Sjt. Bose and the Left may be summed up thus. Ultimatum at Tripuri to Imperialism, immediate preparation for struggle. More militant policy to be followed by the ministries,

better understanding between the Ministries and the labour and Kisan organisation and avoiding of conflict in the camp of the National Front, further widening of civil liberties with counter guarantees ensured by the joint agreement between Congress and the Labour and Kisan organisations. On the issue of States—centralised and co-ordinated guidance and help to the states peoples' struggle through the Indian National Congress.

As pointed out in our last month's Editorial, the one is a line which leads inevitably to compromise and conciliation, through the avoidance of struggle, while the other is a line of a people's offensive which is dictated by the national as well as international situation. Is it possible to achieve a common line of action in view of these differences ? We say yes. Our reasons are as follows. The line of the Right is understood by its rank and file as also a line of struggle. It is understood as a tactic of "hasten slowly!" With the rapidly developing situation the need for an offensive is dawning upon this rank and file also. The majority vote for Subhash is a clear indication of this change.

### **The British Offensive**

Let us examine this point more in detail. British Imperialism has been playing a loosing game throughout the last year against the Fascist Dictators ; consequently it is being driven to an increasing attack against the subject peoples of its Empire. It must defend its imperial possessions with all its might. The continued exploitation is its main source of strength in the coming war. That is why the British Government is taking an increasingly aggressive attitude towards the Indian people as a whole and against the Congress. Inspite of the repeated resolutions of the Congress Assembly Party, the Viceroy has continued to extend the lease of life of the Central Assembly. The Central Government is being used as a tool to serve the purpose of the autocratic central federal authority. Vital demands of Indian Trade and Industry such as ratio, reservation of coastal shipping, discrimination against foreign capital entering into new industries etc. are being turned down. The British Central Government is conspiring with the Princes to smash the States people's struggle for responsible government by staging "Organised goondaism" and inciting communal riots. As Gandhiji recently remarked, the States people's struggle is becoming an issue between

the Congress on the one hand and the Central Government on the other. Lastly as the Viceroy recently announced the Federation is not far off. Revised draft of the instruments of instruction have been issued to the Princes and their replies are to be obtained within six months.

### **Our Reply—Ultimatum**

The rising militancy and magnitude of the mass struggle in the British provinces and the Indian states as well as rejection of the Federation by all parties undoubtedly delayed the offensive. But it has not been stopped entirely. With the worsening international situation it is being intensified. Conflict between the Congress and the Government is already developing on the issue of the Central Government of the states and of the Federation. That is why the time is ripe for grasping the initiative for an offensive for giving an ultimatum of 6 months to the British Government demanding complete independence, all power to the people, through the Constituent Assembly. The draft resolution must lay down that if the National Demand is not granted within six months the Congress decides to launch a direct all India struggle, the form of which will be determined by the A.I.C.C.

### **Six Months' Preparation**

This draft resolution must also include the following points which lay down the policy and programme of action to be followed during the intervening 6 months.

- (1) Agitation for the dissolution of the present Central Assembly.
- (2) A uniform programme for the States. Co-ordinated and centralised guidance and help to the States people's struggle through an A.I. States Committee directly under the Working Committee. All India demonstrations, organisation of relief etc. organised by the National Congress in solidarity with the States people's cause.
- (3) A 6-month programme of preparation for struggle. A unified All-India Volunteer Corps, as nucleus of the National Army. Creation of politically and technically trained cadres for the continuation of struggle and organisation under the conditions of repression. Actively Functioning Congress Committee, campaign for the purification of Congress organisation without prejudice to its broad basis and democratic functioning.
- (4) An essential condition for the preparation of the struggle is

the liquidation of all conflict between the ministries and the labour and Kisan organisations. Special efforts have to be made to achieve an understanding between the ministries and these organisations on the issues of agrarian and labour legislations and on the issue of Civil Liberties.

(5) Similarly the state of tension between the Congress Committees and the Trade Unions and the Kisan Sabhas must be replaced by fraternal relations.

(6) Unity with communal minorities, especially the Muslim and the untouchables, through appeal for joint struggle against the Federation. Coalition Ministries wherever necessary and possible on the basis of the Congress programme of struggle, granting of all minority demands and the working out of a radical agrarian programme.

### **Tripuri's Battle Call**

We have outlined the main points of a draft omnibus resolution on the basis of which we want Subhash Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru to achieve unity between the Right and the Left. We are of the opinion that a serious and patient effort must be made to achieve agreement in an enlarged meeting of the Working Committee on such a draft resolution. The right-wingers must agree to accept the plan of the ultimatum and the interim preparation. The Left, the labour and Kisan organisations will be willing to come to a reasonable agreement with the issue of civil liberties. The Left will ever be willing to make sacrifices in the interest of national unity and for joint national struggle. If such an agreement results in an agreed resolution the Working Committee in the next few days then Tripuri would be an unprecedented demonstration of nation's unity and militant strength. The people's ultimatum would be given, the nation's clarion call for battle will call millions to attention. Tripuri will turn a new leaf in the history of our nation's struggle for emancipation.

## TRIPURI—A REVIEW

Tripuri reflected all the weaknesses and defects of the national movement at the present stage. The Congress was faced with an unprecedented crisis. It met at a time when both the national and international situation demanded bold decisions. But it was the organisational crisis which overshadowed all and dominated the entire session.

### The Background

Since after the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Congress organisation, its influence and popularity have grown at a tremendous pace. The National Congress has increasingly come to represent the consciousness of the Indian people, and has embodied their urge for freedom and independence. This immense growth of the mass influence of the Congress has not been fully reflected in the leadership of the Congress. While the masses are increasingly on the move and mass struggles are bursting out on all sides, the leadership continues to follow a policy of drift and compromise. As expressed by Gandhiji at the time of Office Acceptance, the policy dominating the Congress has been one of using the Ministries to avoid revolution on the one hand and a mass civil disobedience on an unheard of scale, on the other. The working of Ministries has, if anything, intensified the tendency of drift.

The failure of the Congress leadership to reflect the new urge and consciousness of the masses has resulted in the increasing disillusionment of the Congress ranks in the policy of drift. Subhash Babu's re-election in the face of the opposition of the dominant leadership of the Congress was an indication of this radicalisation in the Congress ranks, of the dissatisfaction with this policy dictated from the top.

Subhash's election by the delegates was a vote for a militant policy on the part of the Congress. Gandhiji and the right wing members of the Working Committee, however, took it as a vote of noconfidence in themselves and the latter resigned from the Working Committee precipitating a crisis in the national organisation.

Subhash's victory in the election did not imply lack of confidence in the old leadership of the Congress. It was a mandate to the same leadership for the new policy of preparation and struggle. This mandate the old leadership refused to accept and came forward with the theory of "homogeneous Cabinet" as if the mandate of the delegates was not for the Congress as a whole but for Subhash Babu alone.

### **Issues Confused**

Events moved fast after Subhash Babu's election. The resignation of the old guards of the Working Committee threw the entire country into confusion. The political consideration which had decided the voting in favour of Subhash had been thrown into the background.

The solution of the organisational crisis which had been precipitated by the Right had come to occupy the foremost place. Tripuri met at this juncture with the heart of every Congressman throbbing with anxiety. The fate of the Congress and the entire national movement was in the balance. Will Tripuri mean a split? Will it be able to overcome the crisis? These were the questions dominating the minds of all at the eve of Tripuri Congress.

The right wing leaders had propounded the theory of a homogeneous cabinet. This meant complete withdrawal of the co-operation of the right and ultimately forcing Bose to resign his presidentship. Homogeneity plea only meant that the Right wing was propounding the view of incompatibility of the two wings of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi had written in this strain just after the Delhi. A. I. C. C. walk-out and it seemed as if the theory was going to be put in practice and the Democles' Sword which had been hanging over the Congress was going to fall and have its victim.

While the Right was thus taking its stand on the basis of a disruptive policy, there was a section of the left which was equally going to the other extreme and threatened disruption from the Left.

### **The Swing to the Left—Its Limitations and Shortcomings**

During the course of the last three or four years, the Left has gained increasing strength. Dissatisfied with the policy of drift followed by the leadership, more and more ranks have turned towards the Left which was showing the way out of the difficulties. The Leftward swing has been rapid and swift. But the parties of

the Left were not so swift in absorbing the new elements which were groping their way towards them. The Communists and Socialists were not able to give these new Left element the education and training which would make them conscious lefts, and enable them to play their proper role in the national struggle. Organisationally, the place of most of them was within the C.S.P., but the C.S.P. was not expanding: it has been marking time for a long period. These new left elements fell an easy prey to certain adventurist leaders in the Congress who, due to their old factional past were not so much concerned with the Congress accepting the new policy of struggle, as with getting control of the Congress organisation. Congress Working Committee to them was a pawn in the game and it had somehow to be brought under control. These elements also supported the homogeneous cabinet proposal, only from the other side. They wanted a Working Committee entirely of the Left and of themselves in which the old leadership was to find no place. The most consistent exponent of this theory was Roy who in the course of a manifesto distributed at Tripuri said "Irrespective of the attitude of the older leaders, re-constitution of the Supreme Executive of the Congress must take place as a logical consequence of the result of the presidential election." For, according to him, "otherwise the Congress will not be given an alternative leadership and the historic necessity of a consciously revolutionary leadership will not be fulfilled."

Between these die-hards from the Right and the Left Congress seemed to be facing disunity and disruption. Their tug-of-war had already diverted the whole issue before Tripuri away from the political plane. The problem of the Change of policy, of the adoption of a policy of struggle and conscious direction had already been relegated to the rear.

### **The Possibilities**

Tripuri Congress presented immense possibilities. The majority of the Congress delegates had voted in favour of a new policy when British Imperialism was faced with a grave crisis in international arena. Its policy of appeasement, instead of succeeding in its end has whetted the appetite of the fascist powers. When the stocks of British Imperialism stood so low, it was exactly the time when the National forces were maturing in their revolutionary strength.

Workers, peasants, students, all section of the population have been rising to a new awakening and consciousness. The people in the States were rising from their slumbers of centuries and were on their march. This was the opportunity to launch an offensive on the part of the Congress against the proposed Federal Scheme, against the Imperialist domination itself and achieve the independence of the country. As a corollary to this new policy of the Congress, there was the need for a united leadership which would properly reflect the desires and aspirations of the Congress. The united leadership in which both the Left and the Right could co-operate and enable the Congress to make the advance that national and international situation demanded. With the election of Bose the possibilities of such as advance opened before the Congress and a historic step forward, by which the Congress was to make a breach with the past policy of drift and prepare for launching an offensive, and have a leadership which would unify and head the entire forces of the Congress and the Nation to participate in this struggle, was on the order of the day.

The Communists and Socialists realised the possibilities of the situation and consciously worked in the direction of making this advance. They formulated the tasks facing *Tripuri*. *Congress should emerge as a Congress of unity and struggle, struggle through unity for struggle*. They moved for getting the Congress to accept a programme of struggle which would be the best guarantee of revolutionary unity.

### **Unity and Struggle**

A draft of the National Demand resolution agreed between the Socialists and Communists was prepared which after reviewing the increasing strength of the forces of struggle declared that, "taking into account the situation in the country and outside, the Congress feels that the time has come to lead all this rising tide, into a nation-wide attack at the very existence of imperialist domination and secure for the people of India a Constitution of their own making. To this clarion call for an immediate offensive was attached a concrete programme of action for the Congress "to put the organisation on a fighting basis", to eliminate factors making communal dissensions and disruption, to build a much stronger front against imperialism by drawing closer the organisations of



the workers and peasants, to develop the fighting capacity of the people, by the Ministries utilising the opportunity of offices more fully, to co-ordinate and develop the struggles of the peoples of the various states as an integral part of the national movement, the creation of a national volunteer corps, so that by the time the Congress met again a fit situation may be created for the enforcement of the national demand for Independence.

*The resolution if passed would have been a charter of struggle and would have given the lead to the nation for the final struggle for independence.*

The Communists and Socialists not only agreed among themselves, but also approached the Left nationalists with the agreed draft and got their consent for the same. The entire Left stood united for pressing this programme of struggle upon the Congress and putting the Congress on different rails. The first condition of success in getting this programme accepted was the unity of the left itself which had been fulfilled. It was now possible to press it upon other sections of the Congress, so as to make it the programme of the Congress as a whole. Jawahar was approached and he agreed in substance with the draft. Jawahar's agreement was of great importance, for with him in favour there was a fair chance of the resolution being passed by the Congress itself. But while the programme was accepted by the entire Left, its implications were not grasped. Programme of struggle necessitates united Congress and only unity in the entire national ranks could enable this programme to be carried through. While there was a section of the right which neither liked this programme nor wanted a really united Congress, there was a section of the left as well which accepted this fighting programme but would not accept its necessary implication of fighting for maintaining the unity of the congress, and of working for a united Working Committee which would have the co-operation of both wings of the Congress. They were thinking in terms of a Left Working Committee and working for the same. *It was necessary for the United Left to take the initiative for proposing a united Working Committee as well, in order to supplement their proposal for the united fighting programme. Here the left failed and allowed Tripuri to be turned into a Congress which shirked real issues of the movement and carried on fight on non-political personal plane.*

The Communists and Socialists put their entire weight in favour of a united Working Committee. They attempted to win the support of the right as well as the lefts in favour of this. But they met with concerted opposition from both the quarter. With Bose as the president, the left was in a position to seize the initiative and put forward the proposal of a united Working Committee. Such a proposal on Bose's part would have rallied the Congress except the disruptive elements of extreme Right. It would have enabled us to act as the unifiers of the Congress. Those who would have opposed the proposals would have exposed themselves as disruptors. Under the united pressure of the left, centre and the reasonable elements of the Right, Congress unity would have been forged on the basis of united Working Committee and a sound basis for a militant fighting programme of the Congress would have been prepared.

### **The President's failure**

This was not to be. The proposal of the Communists and Socialists for making a move in this direction was not liked by the Rashtrapati probably under pressure from the nationalist Left elements who wanted an exclusive Left Working Committee or at least a Working Committee with a clear majority for the Left. The failure of Bose to take the initiative left the field free to the right and they were not slow to take advantage of the situation.

### **Right Seizes the Initiative**

With signatures of more than 100 A.I.C.C members they sponsored a resolution in the A.I.C.C. wherein they proposed the unity of the Congress but a unity which was on terms advantageous to the Right

Pant's resolution embodied the Right wing's method of bringing about unity in the Congress. It attempted to restore the domination of the Right wing in the supreme organ of the Congress. It was not a move for a united Working Committee in which the Right and Left would co-operate; it was for installing a Right Working Committee with which the Left must co-operate unconditionally. The resolution even administered a rebuke to the President who as the representative of the Left had got elected to the Presidential chair. Thus the resolution restored unity in the Congress by demanding complete surrender of the Left.

The failure of the left to take the initiative in favour of unity, enabled the Right to capitalise all the sentiments for unity in favour of this resolution. The mover made a fervent appeal for unity in the Congress ranks and asked all those who wanted unity to support the resolution. The left was put on the defensive. Instead of coming out as unifiers, they had to plead and argue that they also stood for unity but on terms fair to both the wings. The Left was put to the necessity of moving amendments to get those portions deleted, which militated against real unity, and which in effect were meant to squeeze the Left.

While the entire Left could not be united in favour of a positive lead for a united Working Committee, it was possible, after some differences, to unite all the left elements except the small group round Roy in favour of the amendments to Pant's resolution.

The position taken by the Left was clear. Unity in the Congress ranks was absolutely indispensable, for only a united Congress could lead the country against imperialism. At the present, when we give a call to the nation for a nationwide struggle against imperialist domination, it is not the time to emphasise our ideological differences with Gandhiji and his followers. We have differences with Gandhiji, we will never give up our right to speak about them, but right now Gandhiji's co-operation and guidance is essential, we therefore; accept that under Gandhiji's leadership a united Working Committee must be given the task to prepare the country for launching the offensive against Imperialism.

There were voices in the Left which were against the acceptance of Gandhiji's leadership. They would emphasise the necessity of over-throwing the same. It appeared opportunistic to them to consent to Gandhian leadership. Little do they realise, however, that they are taking an abstract point of view. The task at Tripuri was not to popularise our critique of Gandhism, with a view to ultimately—sometimes in future—bring the Congress under our leadership. The task was now and here to commit the whole Congress to that forward step which would enable us to launch a struggle against imperialism. Those who would care for the immediate advance and who would see that this advance alone could be the stepping stone for more advance in future had no hesitation in considering Gandhian leadership as inevitable for the present stage. It is only the infantile babblers who would think that their principles are so weak as to

be in danger of being lost sight of, unless they protested in season and out of season, who think that their revolutionary purism would be lost if they accept Gandhian leadership even though it be for launching the struggle against imperialism, in short only those who value words more than struggle, could protest against the stand taken by the left. The Left unequivocally came forward to point out the undesirable features of the resolution. They protested against the positions which implied lack of confidence in the democratically elected President, against the attempt made in the resolution to reconstitute the domination of the Right and made an appeal for modifying the resolution so as to transform it in favour of a united Congress and a united Working Committee.

### **A Moral Victory**

In fighting for the amendments to the resolution, the left was really fighting for genuine unity in the national ranks. The entire strength of the left was being put in favour of the policy of forging a united Congress, the fittest instrument for national struggle. The left was therefore able to mobilise many centre elements. It could win the sympathies of a large mass of delegates. Even when the Right refused to modify the resolution, and pressed it to vote, the Left went to vote with the sympathisers of the centre and of many of those also who voted in favour of the resolution. The left mustered 135 against 218 of the Right, the highest votes that the left has yet got in the history of the Congress. It was clear that though defeated in votes, the moral victory was of the Left, the moral sympathies were with them and the delegates would record a higher voting strength in favour of the Left.

### **The Landslide**

But the lessons of the entire developments seem to have been lost upon a section of the Left. They did not realise that they could win and make any advance *only to the extent that they fought for additional unity*, that the task of the left is not to work for sectional gains, but to strive their best for national advance, and to the extent that they do that, they advance their own strength and the strength of the nation. The extreme left section failing to see this obvious truth reinforced by the experience at Tripuri, easily got provoked and staged the rowdy demonstration in the open session. The Communists and Socialists had forestalled some such ugly

developments and prepared their ranks to fight against any such move. But a small element who style themselves as 'left' alienated the sympathies of the centre and prepared for the landslide of the votes on the following day.

Sarat Babu's stand on the National Demand resolution still further exposed the left nationalists as opportunists. The National Demand resolution certainly did not embody all that the left wanted but it marked a great step forward and enabled us to take the Congress as a whole in the direction of a fighting programme. Sarat Babu's opposition to the resolution as a whole made it impossible for the Left to stand united and further alienated the sympathies of those who stood for a militant programme, on the basis of a united Congress.

### **A Session of Lost Opportunities**

Next day's debacle was a foregone conclusion. The moral victory of the Left in the Subjects Committee had been transformed into a moral victory of the Right by the adventurist acts of the irresponsible 'Left'. The great opportunity of making a historic advance in the development of the united Congress was thus lost. For this the extreme right element was certainly responsible to a great extent. But the adventurist left was also responsible to a greater extent, first by refusing to allow the united left to take the initiative for a united Working Committee and then by creating the scene in the open session and thus preventing all chances of utilising the pressure of the mass of delegates to force the right to modify the resolution. *Tripuri is a session of lost opportunities for the left because of the irresponsible anti-united front and ultrasectarian attitude of a section of the left.*

This failure of a section of the left enabled the right wing to concentrate the attention of the entire Congress on Pant's resolution to the extent of pushing the real issues of struggle to the rear. Nonetheless, the Tripuri Congress has marked a real advance in its political decisions.

The original draft of Jawaharlal was partially based upon the agreed draft of the left. It declared that 'the time has come for the full application of the principle of self-determination to India, so that the people of India might establish an independent democratic state by means of a Constituent Assembly'. It, however, still lacked

the operative part and did not indicate what the Congress decides to do in order to achieve this goal. The joint amendment of the Communists and Socialists attempted to remove this deficiency. But Jawaharlal himself came forward to accept the central idea of the amendment and incorporated in the resolution that 'with a view to prepare the country for a nation-wide struggle, this Congress calls upon all parts of the Congress organisations, Congress Provincial Governments and the people generally' to eliminate communal disruption, co-ordinate the work of Provincial Governments with work outside the legislatures and to strengthen the Congress organisation, 'so as to make it a still more effective organ of the People's will.'

### **For Nation-wide Struggle**

The National Demand resolution marks a definite step forward. For the first time, it calls upon the Congress 'to prepare for a nation-wide struggle'. The Haripura resolution on Federation simply reiterated the Congress opposition to the Federation, and declared that the Congress would combat it whenever it was imposed, thus leaving the initiative to imperialism to choose its own time and opportunity to inaugurate the Federation. It implied that the Congress would not seize the initiative on its own. But the National Demand resolution makes an estimation of the national and international situation and declares that the time has come for preparing the country to launch a nation-wide struggle. It calls upon the Congress and the people to prepare for such struggle. The resolution thus, while not calling upon for an immediate offensive, gives us the basis for moving the entire Congress, for preparing for a mighty national struggle in the immediate future and thus take the Congress on the road of mass movement and away from the present policy of drift.

The resolution on the States Peoples struggles also registers some advance over the Haripura resolution. The policy of non-intervention in the States has been given up. But the advance in the resolution only reflects what already constituted the practice towards the movement in the States. The initiative to organise and co-ordinate the States' Struggles is still lacking in the decision over States' problem. But as in the case of the National Demand resolution, the resolution does provide a basis for an increasing identification of the Congress with the struggles of the States'

**Peoples** And the initiative and work of the Left can force the Congress to co-ordinate and unify these struggles to a greater extent and thus prepare both the British Indian and the States people for the coming nation-wide offensive

Tripuri Congress places a great responsibility on the left. United Left can capitalise the political advance made in the Tripuri resolution and lead the united congress on to the path of struggle and offensive against imperialism, objective which we have cherished for years and which is now almost within our grasp. For this, we need the strength of the entire left directed towards the sole purpose of popularising the National Demand resolution, of politically and organisationally preparing the country for the call given in the resolution, always bearing in mind that the National Demand can only be achieved through unity and struggle. Energetic work for both will enable us to repair the damage done at Tripuri, to recapture the opportunity lost there and to take the country nearer to its goal of independence.

We must however, sound a note of warning against the disruptive tendencies already at work. There is a section of the right which wants to go back upon the repeated assurance that Pant's resolution did not mean a vote of censure upon the president, which is trying to worsen matters and which seems to think that the passing of the resolution is a blank card to them to launch an offensive against the left, thus giving free rein to disruption in the Congress. There is also a section of the left which would refuse to accept the verdict of Tripuri and think of going behind it by devious means. Both will have disastrous consequences. The duty of the genuine left, of every Congressman is clear to prevent disruption from either side and to seriously set about the task of preparing for the coming struggle which both the national and international situation is beckoning us to start

## **JOINT STATEMENT OF P. C. JOSHI AND JOIPRAKASH NARAYAN**

### **On Formation of Congress Working Committee**

With the meeting of the A.I.C.C. fast approaching, the fact that the Working Committee of the Congress has not yet been formed, is causing concern to all Congressmen and the country generally. We feel certain that if the A.I.C.C. meets without the Working Committee there will be utter confusion and renewed bitterness and conflict. It is imperative, therefore, that the Working Committee is formed before the A.I.C.C. The delay, whatever its cause may be and certainly be President's illness and Mahatma Gandhiji's preoccupation with Rajkot affairs are among the main, has already been regrettable, particularly in view of the critical state of affairs in Europe.

#### **They Must Meet**

Discussion regarding the formation of Working Committee has been proceeding for some time now between the President and Mahatma Gandhi. We feel strongly this is a matter that cannot be settled satisfactorily through correspondence. In our humble opinion it is necessary that the President and Mahatma Gandhi should meet. If due to Rajkot tangle such meeting is not possible before 28th April, the A.I.C.C. should be postponed for a week or two as found necessary. The issue of such a momentous question should not be left to the hazardous chances of correspondence.

#### **No Irrelevant Issues**

We further feel that in the formation of the Working Committee no irrelevant considerations should be allowed to intrude. Questions such as were raised by an "ultravires" issue and the question of

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*This relates to the situation created in Indian National Congress following victory of Subhas Chandra Bose as President in Tripuri Congress and Pant Resolution adopted in the same Congress. Pant Resolution curbed the authority and freedom of the President of Congress to form the Working Committee. This joint Statement was Published in "NATIONAL FRONT", April 3, 1939.*



the programme for the year, etc., should not be allowed to cloud the issue. We are glad that the "ultravires" matter had been cleared up, and as we understand, it was settled to Gandhiji's satisfaction. *As for the programme for the year, the issue is irrelevant to the formation of the Committee.* The latter cannot lay down new programmes; it can only execute those laid down by the annual session of the Congress and the A.I.C.C.

### **For United Leadership**

Regarding the constitution of the Working Committee, while, according to the Congress resolution the latter must be formed in accordance with Gandhiji's wishes, and while it must consist of men of proved integrity, ability and standing, it should, in our opinion be a Composite Committee symbolising united leadership. In view of the national and international situation, this becomes doubly imperative. We hope that Gandhiji will not overlook the necessity.

### **Against Disruption and Side-tracking**

Finally, we hope that nothing will be allowed to happen that may put any obstacle in the way of Gandhiji's giving his advice in this matter and of the Tripuri resolution being implemented. Any such eventualty would recreate a crisis at the A.I.C.C., which can only damage further the unity and prestige of the Congress and deflect the country's attention from the main tasks and problems facing it.

### **The Main Task**

These problems clearly are how the Congress and the country are to meet the war crisis that is fast overtaking Europe and Asia. That already extends from Shanghai to Gibraltar and how to prepare in accordance with the resolve of the Tripuri Congress to strike at the roots of Imperialism in India and to prepare for a nation-wide struggle.

### **Nation Waits for Lead**

The nation looks to the forthcoming sitting of the A.I.C.C., to give a concrete lead in this regard and devise means of strengthening the Congress and maintaining and extending the National unity that it already represents and expresses. Let us endeavour so that the A.I.C.C. fulfils the hopes of the Nation.

## INDIAN NATIONALISM AFTER TRIPURI

Ben Bradley

TRIPURI, A VILLAGE in Central Provinces, sprang into fame when the Indian National Congress decided to hold its 52nd Session there in March last. Despite the fact that certain issues and serious conflicts overshadowed the eve of this Congress session, the delegates who attended were able to overcome these conflicts and register very remarkable and important decisions. The Resolution on the "National Demand" must be considered a definite political advance. This resolution calls for a "nation-wide struggle," and demands that the Congress organisations and also the Congress Governments should take steps to prepare for this.

The possibilities of carrying this resolution into effect can be better understood when we measure the struggle of the Congress. Within three years the Indian National Congress has increased its membership from six hundred thousand to a figure which stands now at over four millions. This phenomenal growth of the Congress membership has reflected the increasingly strong and representative character of the Congress as the united organisation of the national movement with the overwhelming election victories of 1937, the achievements of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces and the accompanying mass awakening. The growth of Congress membership has helped to transform the character of the Congress, raising to a high level the popular struggle against Imperialism, and is one of the most important features in the situation in India.

Coupled with this there has been the unprecedented development of the struggle of the workers and peasants. On the workers' side the most significant event was the achievement of unity of the Trade Union movement at Nagpur last year which was quickly followed by the fusion of a number of parallel unions. In the strike struggles the workers have shown remarkable determination. The textile workers of Cawnpore, after a long struggle, won a victory forcing

the millowners to implement the recommendations of the Congress Inquiry Committee, and while cementing Congress-Labour unity. have built a powerful union of 18,000 strong.

Powerful strike movements were also conducted in places as far apart as Kandesh, Sholapur. Calcutta, Madras and Bihar; while one of the most important events of the year was the great one-day Protest Strike of the Bombay workers on November 7 against the Trades Dispute Bill.

At the same time there has been a tremendous development of peasant struggle and organisation. By huge demonstrations and marches and daily struggle against the Zamindars, they are developing their movement against oppression and terrorism. The third Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha which met at Comilla represented the organised strength of 550,000 paying members. The fourth session which has just concluded at Gaya records a membership of over 8,00,000.

In unity with the growth of the mass movement in what is known as British India, the people of the Indian States, forced hitherto to exist under the despotic rule of the Rajahs and Princes. have moved into action demanding democratic rights and civil liberties. Throughout the States, in Orissa, Rajputana, Rajkot, Gujerat and Deccan, people have been drawn into this struggle. Extreme terror and the shooting down of people has characterised the struggle in Mysore, Travancore, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Ranpur and other States. The people in the States organised themselves into Praja Mandals (States' People's party) in order to achieve democratic rights and relief from their economic burdens.

These mighty mass struggle of the workers, peasants and States people during 1938, the building of their independent working-class organisations. and the rapid increase in the membership of the Indian national Congress indicated a political awakening of vast new sections of the Indian people. These newly-awakened sections provided a dynamic force within the National movement, demanding the fulfilment of the Congress election pledges and the development of Congress activity towards the utilisation of the mass force as a weapon to challenge Imperialism.

The Congress has been functioning in office as Ministries for two years in nine Provinces out of the eleven in British India. We must recognise the restricted possibilities imposed by financial

limitations under the Constitution. for carrying through legislation. Despite this the Congress Ministries in these Provinces have gone some way towards redeeming their election pledges in the face of these extreme difficulties.

While the workers have been pressing their demands for decent wages and conditions and for factory legislation, and the peasants have been demanding relief from indebtedness, reduction of rent, revision of Tenancy Laws and more expenditure for social and cultural amenities, there has been a growing feeling that the Congress Ministries have not moved quickly enough.

Jawaharlal Nehru has indicated this in his statement. "Where Are We?" as follows :

The machinery of Government was working in much the same way as of old, although various reforms had been introduced. In Madras especially the Congress Government functioned in some ways perilously like the old Government.

This tremendous mass awakening was now merely expressing itself in the demand that the Congress Ministries fulfil their election pledges more speedily, but that the Congress organisation be adapted to methods of struggle more fitted to the conditions of a mass party. they demanded that the struggle against the Federation be conducted, not only within the Parliamentary sphere, but also outside.

The question of Federation became the centre-point of these gathering issues within the movement. The Congress stood committed to a policy of resisting and preventing the introduction of the Federal Constitution, which would represent, not in any sense even a limited constitutional advance, but a strengthening of reaction and of the grip of imperialism in India. The acceptance of office in the Provinces was clearly understood and stated in all official documents to represent not a acceptance of constitutionalism, but a stage of preparation for future mass struggle to win complete independence on the basis of a Constitution framed by a freely elected Constituent Assembly.

Imperialism, on the other hand was determined to impose the Federal plan at as early a date as possible, saw in the formation of the Provincial Ministries a step to a policy of collaboration, and openly expressed the hope that, despite the official decisions to the contrary, in practice it would be able to secure, when the time came, the co-operation of moderate elements in the leadership of the

Congress. Various conversations took place between prominent representatives of imperialism and individual Congress leaders, and rumours began to be spread that a compromise was in prospect. There was no basis in any official declarations for such rumours. It was true, however, that individual moderate leaders had made statements which implied a possible compromise on the basis of a modified Federal Constitution; and many left wing elements, already alarmed at the "drift to constitutionalism," and knowing that the right wing was dominant in the "High Command," feared that, despite brave words, a surrender would follow.

In reality the deeper issue behind these controversies lay in the question of the mass basis of the Congress and its relation to the developing mass struggle of the workers and peasants. Only in proportion as the Congress deepened and strengthened its mass basis and its organic relation to the mass struggle could it develop the strength to be capable of defeating Federation and imposing its own terms on imperialism. The fears expressed by the moderate elements of the leadership with regard to the rapid advance of the workers' and peasants' movement, the deprecation of class struggle as a violation of "non-violence," and increasing readiness to use or defend police coercive measures against strikes and unrest, meant inevitably that, whatever their subjective intentions, objectively they were travelling along a path which led to increasing compromise with imperialism. This danger, however, was not to be met by shrilly reiterated negative declarations or denunciations of the right wing, but only by a positive constructive programme and work for strengthening the mass basis of the Congress, increasing its responsiveness to mass demands, building up workers' and peasants' organisation, enlightening the membership on the issues and working to influence the policy of the Ministries accordingly. This was the task which the Socialists and Communists, who were winning increasing influence within the left wing, tried to accomplish.

It was in this situation that Subhash Chandra Bose, who had been nominated President the previous year without a contest, decided to contest the Congress Presidential election this year for re-election, on the basis of posing the political issue of launching a nation-wide struggle against Federation and resisting the tendencies, which he described as existing in the right wing leadership, towards compromise. For the first time the presidential election was contested.

The key importance of the contest lay in the fact that the Working Committee, or ruling organ of the Congress, is not elected, but nominated by the President; thus the election of the President is the constitutional opportunity for the voice of the membership to be expressed with regard to the character of the leadership of the Congress. The opposing candidate to Bose was supported by Gandhi and the majority of the members of the old working Committee. Bose was supported by the Communists, Socialists and Left Nationalists. In the event Bose was elected by 1575 to 1376 votes.

The election of Bose, in the face of the opposition of the official machine, led to a sharp inner crisis. In fact the result of the personal election of a President, while having its importance as a barometer of feelings among the rank and file, could by no means be regarded as a definitive political judgment or indication of a left majority in the membership. The subsequent proceedings at Tripuri were to prove this. But the interpretations that were at first placed on the result, both among many of the right and on the left, were such as to raise dangers of sharp division imperilling the unity of the Congress.

M. K. Gandhi, in a public statement, interpreted the result as a personal defeat for himself and his policies, and threatened the possibility of a secession of right wing from the Congress. Twelve of the fifteen members of the Working Committee resigned, in order, as they explained, to leave a free field for Bose, and also on the grounds that they felt that in his election campaign he had cast aspersions on their bona fides. Jawaharlal Nehru also resigned from the Working Committee, though with a separate statement explaining his special viewpoint (this will be found more fully explained in the booklet issued by him in connection with the crisis, entitled "Where Are We?") The imperialist press loudly announced a "split" of the Congress. The controversy, as it developed was in danger of moving from a political to a personal plane.

While the Right Wing viewed with alarm the re-election of S. C. Bose and the consolidation of Left forces around him as being a challenge to their leadership, certain disruptive elements on the left began pressing for the "seizure of power" and the formation of an entirely new Working Committee around S. C. Bose. Since the left wing is still a minority in the Congress, as the results of

Tripuri showed, this would have meant an attempt to impose a minority leadership on the Congress and thus invite a split.

When the Tripuri Congress met, there was thus a dangerous crisis requiring to be solved. Both on the right and on the left there were tendencies which were ready to press forward the issue to a split. Those sections, including the Socialists and Communists, who were concerned to maintain a united leadership representing and balancing the relation of forces in the National Front so as to preserve a united front for the coming fight against imperialism were faced with an extremely difficult task. Nevertheless, it can be stated with confidence that the results of the Tripuri Session, even though not fully satisfactory in all respects, show that all efforts at disrupting the United National Front and the Congress from whatever quarters, were frustrated for the time being and that the final decisions mark an advance in the national struggle for India's freedom.

Our task now is to examine the decisions of Tripuri and to find out how they can be effectively used as weapons to further strengthen the Congress, increasing its mass basis, and carrying forward the struggle

It was clear that the first task facing the delegates at Tripuri, before policy or programme could be considered, was the need to clear the atmosphere. In this connection it was the Right which took the initiative by moving a resolution of confidence in Mahatma Gandhi. The resolution was a bid to restore the status quo in leadership around the personality of M. K. Gandhi, but at the same time dragging in a question of alleged aspersions cast against former members of the Working Committee and laying down that the new Working Committee must be nominated in accordance with the wishes of Gandhi. There was considerable opposition to the later part of this resolution. The Communists and Socialists stressed the need for a united leadership including members of the old Working Committee, at the same time calling for a policy of advance. While this resolution was passed (by 218 to 135 in the Subjects Committee) it left a considerable amount of heartburn among the delegates.

The main resolution of the Session was on the "National Demand." The resolution stated that the Congress has for more than half-a-century striven for the advancement of the people of

India and that it had carried the Nation a long way towards Independence. The resolution traces the steps in pursuance of its objective and reiterates the Congress declaration of uncompromising opposition to the Federal part of the Government of India Act, and determination to resist its imposition. We will quote the rest of the resolution :

The Congress declares afresh its solemn resolve to achieve independence for the nation, and to have a Constitution framed for a free India through a Constituent Assembly elected by the people and without any interference by a foreign authority. No other Constitution or attempted solutions of the problem can be accepted by the Indian people. The Congress is of the opinion that, in view of the situation in India, the organised strength of the National Movement, the remarkable growth of the consciousness of the masses, the new awakening among the people of the Indian States, as well as the rapid development of the world situation, the time has come for full application of the principle of self-determination to India, so that the people of India might establish an independent democratic State by means of a Constituent Assembly. Not only the inherent rights and the dignity of the people demand this full freedom, but also the economic and other problems which press insistently on the masses cannot find a solution, nor can India get rid of her poverty and keep pace with modern progress unless the people have full opportunities of self-government and growth, which Independence alone can give. Provincial Autonomy affords no such scope for development, and its capacity for good is being rapidly exhausted; the proposed Federation strangles India still further, and will not be accepted. The Congress therefore is strongly of the opinion that the whole of the Government of India Act must give place to the Constitution for a free India made by the people themselves.

An independent and Democratic India will face the solution of our great problems rapidly and effectively, and will live herself with the progressive peoples of the world, and thus aid the cause of Democracy and freedom.

With a view to the speedy realisation of the Congress objective and in order to face effectively the national and international crises that loom ahead, this Congress calls upon all parts of the congress organisations as well as the Congress Provincial Governments and



the people generally to prepare themselves to this end, to promote unity and in particular to strengthen, purify and discipline the organisation, removing weakness and corrupting influences so as to make it an effective organ of the people's will.

On the question of the Indian States the congress resolution welcomes the awakening of the people in the States. The resolution registered Congress support to the demand for responsible government and Civil Liberties, and declared that the movement for freedom and self-expression in the States was an integral part of the larger struggle for freedom of the whole country. It is also important to note that the resolution states :

The great awakening that is taking place among the people may lead to a relaxation or to a complete removal of the restraint which the Congress has imposed upon itself, thus resulting in the ever-increasing identification of the Congress with the States peoples. The Working Committee is authorised to issue instructions in this behalf from time to time as the occasion arises

The congress desires to reiterate that its objective, complete independence, is for the whole of India, inclusive of the States, which must have the same measure of political, social, economic and religious freedom as a part of India

This was the first occasion that the W. A. F. D. Party of Egypt sent a delegation to attend a Congress Session. The visit of the W. A. F. D. delegation symbolised the solidarity of the movement for freedom in India and Egypt

The resolution of greetings to china reads :

The Congress sends its greetings to the people of China and its deepest sympathy in their trials and privations in their struggle against ruthless and inhuman Imperialism. It congratulates them on their heroic resistance

The Congress expressed its approval of the sending of a Medical Mission on its behalf to the people of China and trusts that this Mission will continue to receive full support, so that it may carry on its work of succour effectively and be a worthy symbol of Indian solidarity with China.

The resolution on the "National Demand" and that on the Indian States both mark a political advance of the Congress on the previous session held at Haripura. The "National Demand"

resolution lays the basis for the development of a nation-wide struggle. The whole of the Government of India Act must go, giving place to a Constitution for a free India framed by a Constituent Assembly full representative of the people of India. It must be the immediate task of sections of the national movement, united within the ranks of the Congress in India, to translate into action the last paragraph of the resolution—the Tripuri Congress calls upon “all parts of the congress organisation as well as the Congress Provincial Governments and the people generally to prepare themselves to this end, to promote unity and in particular to strengthen, purify and discipline the organisation, removing weakness and corrupting influences so as to make it an effective organ of the people’s will.”

The rapidly-moving international situation leaves no time to be lost. Tripuri is over—our task must be how to make the Tripuri resolutions decisions for action. The plan of action put forward by the Communists was not accepted—there is no doubt that it would have strengthened the resolution—but the task now is to strengthen the execution of the resolution. The resolution gives a call to the people of India, to the Congress organisations and to the Congress Governments to prepare for a nation-wide struggle.

There are tremendous possibilities taking the resolutions as it stands. The extent to which the resolution becomes one of action will depend upon how the Congress organisation and Congress membership as a whole develop their local plan of action which will prepare the country for the nation-wide struggle. Each step must be carefully considered. We put forward the slogans at Tripuri—Unity and Struggle—these must still be our slogans. No steps should be consciously taken which would impair the unity of the Congress. The degree to which we are able to prepare and strengthen the Congress organisations, the type of questions on which the Congress organisations will be activated must inevitably be reflected in the policy which the congress Ministries pursue. The task now falls upon the shoulders of all earnest Congressmen to make the Tripuri National Demand resolution a live resolution.

The resolution on States people has shown what can be accomplished—the tremendous advance made by the Indian States peoples between Haripura and Tripuri. By the steady activity and struggle of the States’ people themselves, they compelled the Congress to recognise the relationship of the struggle in the States

as integral parts of the larger struggle for freedom of the whole country.

A number of lessons are provided by Tripuri. We can certainly regard Tripuri Session of the Congress as an advance. The Communists and Socialists as a whole seriously endeavoured to meet in a responsible fashion a difficult situation and greatly helped in the constructive result which was finally achieved.

We should beware of false friends—those who gave the lead for a disruptionist “Revolutionary” Working Committee—and thus did their utmost to wreck the unity of the National Front.

The Socialist and communist unity achieved at Tripuri must be carried to a wider field. A united Socialist Party would be capable of obviating the weaknesses that showed themselves at Tripuri and will be the surest guarantee that the political decision of that Session of the Congress will be implemented

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## ROY EXPOSED : RUPTURE WITH MARXISM OPENLY SEEN

B. T. Ranadive

In one of our articles we demolished the tall claims made by M. N. Roy about his "consistent and revolutionary" stand at Tripuri. We undertook the painful task of disillusioning Roy and his followers about their "ideological battle" and proved that they were indulging in day dreams when they announced themselves as uncompromising revolutionaries. We traced these dishonest claims to political adventurism and we based our case entirely on the speeches and writings of M. N. Roy himself. The charge of distortion levelled by his followers, therefore, is baseless and hardly merits attention.

In the present article we wish to show how the advocates of "alternative leadership" have taken an opportunist attitude on fundamental questions, and how they resorted to abject surrender to the Right, *whenever the struggle against drift assumed a concrete form.*

One of the major problems on which the present day constitutionalist leadership adopts an opportunist and disruptive attitude is the question of the working class.

### Right Wing and Working Class

The task of building up all-embracing unity under the banner of the Congress, the task of winning over the working-class, has been hampered and obstructed by the Rightist leadership all these years.

The adoption of the economic demands of the working-class in the Congress Election Manifesto did not alter the attitude and policy of the Right Wing towards this vital question. It frowned upon the growing struggles of the workers, and often took a hostile attitude. The logical culmination of this attitude was to be found in the firing

on Bombay workers on 7th of November. The firing at Chirala and a number of other places, the banning of stay-in strikes, the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act against Ahmedabad strikers, the incarceration of the Sholapur leaders, and the repeated application of Section 144 to strike struggles.

The inclined plane of Gandhism was leading to disintegration and disruption. Gandhian constitutionalism was manifesting itself in a concrete and ugly form. A warning against disruption was necessary.

### Roy's Stand

How did the advocates of alternative leadership struggle against this dangerous tendency ? Through his organ, Independent India, Roy no doubt protests against the growing attacks on the liberties and rights of the workers. And yet in a speech delivered in January 1938 Roy made the following contribution towards a resolution of the problem. *"Under the given conditions of our country the industrial working class is a negligible factor. If for some reason or other, they stay out of the anti-imperialist struggle, this will not be very much weakened. Therefore, the Congress may not be much concerned with the attitude of the industrial workers"*. (Our Problems. Appendix 11p. XXIV)

A confirmed Rightist could not have misrepresented the case more effectively. That the workers represent a 'minute minority' and that therefore they can be neglected with impunity has been the stock-in-trade of the Gandhian argument for more than a decade. Like the Gandhites, Roy poses the problems of the peasantry in opposition to the workers and asks the Congress to continue the reactionary tradition of neglecting the workers and splitting national unity. Splitting the workers from the peasants is an old strategy and Roy plays the Rightist game when he says that the "Congress may not be much concerned with the attitude of the industrial workers."

The utter opportunism and surrender to Rightist disruption involved in this formulation can be realised in the background of what was happening on the working class front. Lathi charges, firing, section 144-in short every kind of repression followed in the close wake of the wage-increase, it was just on the working class front that national unity was being disrupted by the Right

constitutionalism. that the civil liberties of the people were being daily attacked.

By his opportunist formulation Roy not only failed to fight against this concrete manifestation of present-day Gandhism, but actually justified it. If the people are told that the industrial working class could be neglected they are not likely to portest effectively against the repression directed against it. What concerns the people is the effectiveness of the national struggle. They are not concerned with abstract ideas about civil liberties. The Royist formulation, therefore, objectively justified the attacks on the workers and sanctioned the Rightist practice in relation to the proletariat. The man who thundered against the constitutionalist tendencies in the Congress, became its theoretical exponent on the working-class front.

### **A Somersault**

In Roy's message to the Bombay Labour Conference, Roy has to say the following about the working class *"This being the case, no other section of the Indian people is more concerned with the problem of political independence than the working class. That indeed is the real problem of the labour movement."* (*Independent India*, 17th October 1937). Nearly four months after this Roy made the second formulation which asked the Congress not to bother about the industrial workers. Roy asked the Congress not to concern itself with a section which, according to Roy himself, is more interested in the political struggle than any other section. Can opportunism and inconsistency go further ? Can an effective national front be built in the country by excluding the section most vitally interested in the emancipation struggle ? Let it be remembered that the policy of excluding the working class from the National Front is the policy of the Indian bourgeoisie and its spokesmen are the Right Wing. Roy, the Marxist, openly accepts this conception of the National Front and yet has the hardihood to parade himself as a revolutionary. Heaven save all Indians from such revolutionaries.

### **Rupture with Marxism**

Roy's rupture with Marxism is openly seen here. Roy fails to make a class approach, fails to see in the working class the most modern class with a specific role to play in the Indian struggle. To him the problem is just a problem of minute minority vs

overwhelming majority. A 'marxist' who totally rejects the role of the working class in the struggle for emancipation, a 'marxist' who fails to see that the working class must take the initiative in uniting the forces of national resistance, a 'marxist' who is prepared to keep the working class away from the national struggle, that is what M. N. Roy is. By denying this role Roy pleads against national unity and helps the growing disruption at the hands of the Right. For national unity will always be in danger so long as the working class does not come out as its powerful defender.

By denying this role Roy seeks to deprive the Indian struggle of its striking power. Occupying the most strategic positions in the sphere of production, the working class has got a striking power totally out of proportion to its numerical strength. The general strike of working class is the most effective weapon in the National Armoury. The compromising leadership will not utilise it ; they are afraid of it. It therefore seeks to keep the working class out of the path of national politics. But what has Roy to fear from it if he is a Marxist? Our Marxist regards the general strike as an 'utopia' and seeks to banish the entire working class from the national struggle in order to do away with this communist "dream"

### **Royists and The November Strike**

It is this complete abandonment of Marxism the drives Roy and Royists into opportunist practice. They have always talked about extra-parliamentary struggle. They indulge in loud and heroic resolve to fight the constitutional tendency in the Congress. And yet when they are put to the test, they run away from the field like cowards, surrendering before the onslaught of the Right.

Take for instance the 7th November strike against the Black Bill in Bombay. The Bill was an attack against the democratic rights of the working class. It was an attack against the militant Trade Union movement. It was a national calamity because by attacking the working class movement the Bill sought to weaken the striking power of the nation. Roy and his followers supported the move for a strike, protested against the attack and were loud in their declamations against the Right Wing. This is what Roy wrote in his message to the worker's rally on the 7th November : "No lover of Civil Liberty can dispute the propriety of the decision (to strike) which we shall confirm today.....I am confident that the decision

will be acted upon and a magnificent example of working class solidarity will be given." (*Independent India*, 6th November.)

The working class was not in need of any such exhortation. It acted under the leadership of the Communists and faced the bullets and the wrath of the Right Wing. But where were the Royists—who pretend to carry out an uncompromising struggle against Gandhism. They were not with the workers. They were not to be seen anywhere when the workers' blood was flowing on the streets of Bombay, as a result of Gandhian Constitutionalism which they had condemned. After wordy exhortations for solidarity, they themselves retired from the field and resigned from the Council of Action and left the communists and the workers to face the lathi charges. And *all because the Right Wing threatened to take disciplinary action, against those associated with the strike*. Four days before the strike, Com. Karnik sent in his resignation and justified his step in the following unconvincing words : "But I think I will be able to serve the working class more effectively by remaining within the Congress, with the object of making it more and more amenable to working class." And therefore this lieutenant of Roy denied himself "The pleasure and privilege of helping in the organisation of protest strike." It almost looks like a Gandhian self-denial!

Royists from Maharashtra also ran away from the conflict pompously announcing that they do not want to play into the hands of those who seek to drive the radicals out of the Congress. That is how Royists with all their tall talk about overthrowing Gandhian leadership, fail to resist its onslaught in practice. They run away from the battle before it starts ; when present-day Gandhism manifests itself in a concrete form, they turn their tails, leaving the communists and the workers to fight the drift and protect democratic rights. Yet in their blind opportunism they direct all their fire on the communists and blatantly parade themselves as uncompromising revolutionaries.

The same opportunism was seen in connection with the protest strike of the Sholapur workers in February 1938. The Sholapur workers decided to organise a protest strike to demonstrate their anger at the callous treatment meted out to Harendranath Munshi and to demand the release of all political prisoners. They struck work the same day when the Bihar and U.P. Ministries tendered



their resignations. The Royists together with the Rightists propagated against the strike, propagated against the communist leaders and tried to sabotage the extra-parliamentary action of the workers.

### **On the Kisan front**

This is how Royists acted in spite of thier loud protestations in favour of extra parliamentary movement, in spite of their declamations against the constitutional tendency. That is how they always surrender to the Right Wing when put to test. The surrender of Roy to Rightism on the peasant front is equally glaring. Roy is not tired of reminding his readers that the agrarian revolution is the the crux of the Indian revolution. And yet he asked an ultra-Rightist stand on the question of Kisan Sabhas which are mobilising peasant discontent on an unprecedented scale. The Rightists opposition to Kisan Sabhas is wellknown. The rise of Kisan Sabhas is challenging the monopolist right of the Right Wing to be the interpreter of the peasant discontent. Led by radicals they are attacking national reformism at its sorest point. The Rightists, therefore, denounced the Kisan Sabhas as anti-Congress and anti-national. They sought to ban the Kisan Sabhas at Haripura but were forced to agree to a compromise resolution. Their opposition to Kisan Sabhas became more active just because they have become the greatest stumbling block in the way of a 'constitutional functioning' of the Ministries. The opposition to the Sabhas was part of the constitutional game.

*Our 'Marxist' leader fell into the trap and sang the Rightist tune on the question of the peasant organisations. He became a violent anti-Kisan Sabhaite and even criticises the Right Wing for the concession made at Haripura.*

His 'Marxist' contribution to the problem was made in the following words :— "As regards the organisers of the Kisan Sabhas, they are mistaken to think that their activities will ever strengthen the Congress or do any good to the peasants themselves. Independent Kisan Sabhas cannot be organised without weakening the Congress..... Therefore, any propaganda or organisational activities which will persuade the peasants to leave or stay out of the Congress, must be characterised as counter-revolutionary." ('Our Problems' Appendix II pp. XXVI-XXVIII.)

Roy pleads for transforming the Congress Committess into

peasant organisations and having made this appeal he thinks that the problem is solved. He then chastises the Kisan Organisers, and upbraids them for mobilising the peasants, shakes his head at the growing strength of the Kisan Sabhas and forecasts that all this is bound to weaken the Congress.

### **Why Kisan Sabhas Grew**

Here Roy completely forgets the history of peasants struggles of the past. Before the national struggle developed into a country wide movement, peasants unrest expressed itself outside the framework of national politics. In the non-co-operation movement there appeared to be a fusion; the peasants marched under the banner of the Congress and yet the National struggle has not yet learnt to talk the language of the peasantry. The 1930 struggle also failed to fuse with the peasant masses, and only a few demands of the peasantry figured on the national programme. For the time being the peasantry was led by the capitulation leadership, but it practically broke through it when its no-rent campaign upset the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Though led by a number of Congressmen, the discontent of the peasant masses broke through the narrow framework of compromising policy.

These events prepared for the subsequent developments. A number of Congressmen turned to the peasant masses to organise them and enrich the National struggle. They knew that only a strong peasant movement would prevent the collapse of the Congress and of the National struggle in the future. The rise of the Kisan Sabhas, therefore, was historically determined by the failure of the capitulatory leadership to lead the peasant discontent. The Kisan Sabhas to-day constitute the main guarantee that the National struggle will have the imprint of the peasant discontent on it.

Roy forgets all this and denounces the Kisan Sabhas as anti-Congress organisations. He fails to see that under present conditions the Kisan Sabhas constitute the only guarantee against the divergence between the national and the peasant struggles. On the contrary, he imagines that they must necessarily come into conflict with the Congress and thereby create national disruption.

Thanks to the Kisan Sabhas the demands of agrarian revolution have been popularised. The agrarian unrest is being more and more centralised and on the crest of this developing discontent the Kisans

are more and more turning towards the Congress. Moreover, it is through these peasant organisations that a consistent resistance was put up against the policy of drift. Had it not been for these independent organisations the Congress Ministries in some provinces at any rate would have degraded themselves to the level of the anti-Congress Ministries in Bengal and the Punjab.

Coming into existence as a result of the compromising tendencies of the national leaders the Kisan Sabhas have become the continuous target of attack at the hands of the Right. The Right Wing is getting incensed at seeing its main mass basis being torn away from under itself. For the Kisan Sabhas led by radicals are storming the very basis of National Reformism.

But Roy as a 'Marxist' joins hands with the Rightists even on this question and supports the policy of attacking the Kisan Sabhas. Thus once more we find that on another vital question Royism surrenders to Gandhism in practice. In spite of Roy's declared war against Gandhism he takes an identical stand both on the Working Class and the Kisan Fronts. Whatever may be his reasons, in practice it amounts to nothing but abject surrender before the present day practice of Gandhism.

### **How Communists Fight Reformism**

The communists whom Roy maligns have continuously defended the independent Kisan organisations because they saw that in them today lies the guarantee of activating the peasant masses. They have defended the freedom of the Trade Union movement, entered upon protest strikes in defence of working class liberties because they refused to believe that the Congress could neglect the working class with impunity. Unlike Roy they refused to prostrate themselves before the Gandhian conception of that National unity and never forgot that for Marxists the working class is the most vital class for the regeneration of the Nation. Instead of waging imaginary battles on the basis of abstract principles the Communists challenged the disruptive tendency concretely in every field and attempted to arrest the growth of the constitutional tendencies inside the Congress. They never remained content with expressing their verbal sympathy for extra-parliamentary struggle but actually conducted them in the most vigorous manner. Concretely attempting to check compromise the Communists only gave such slogans as could be implemented

without creating disruption. Their aim has been to bring about such a change in the correlation of forces inside the Congress and the National struggle as would check more and more the vacillations of the Right Wing till they are finally overcome. That is why while fighting the disruptive trend most militantly on the mass front the Communists fought doggedly for united leadership, inside the Congress. Roy and his followers who have run away from every battle denounce this slogan as an opportunist one. They suddenly became heroic and wanted to spirit away the Right Wing leadership without any change in the correlation of forces and only on the strength of the fact that Roy had declared the Right Wing to be antiquated. The Communists on the other hand gave the slogan just because it expressed a new shift to a new change over. It meant an end to the monopolist claims of the Right to lead; it meant the emergence of the Left as co-sharer in the task of National leadership. The Royists would not have been Royists had they understood this simple thing.

To conclude, Royism with all its tall talk about the Jihad against Gandhism succumbs to it on every vital question. It rejects the class role of the Working Class and thereby severs itself from Marxism. It adopts the liberal bourgeois outlook towards the Working Class when it says that the Congress need not bother itself about the Working Class.

It loudly protests its loyalty to extra-parliamentary struggle and runs away at the mere mention of disciplinary action. On the Kisan Front it joins with the Right Wing in denouncing the peasant organisations and thereby defers the task of organising the peasants in the immediate future. It fails to recognise that the Independent Kisan Sabhas are a source of strength to the Congress and that they are effectively sapping the main basis of National Reformism. Refusing to fight concretely, running away from every battle, adopting the Gandhian standpoint on the most vital questions Royism believes that it is engaged in a life and death conflict with the Gandhian leadership. In practice it all amounts to wordy warfare essentially helping the disruptive tendency.

## WHERE DOES UNITY OF THE LEFT STAND ?

P. C. Joshi

The actual breaking out of a world war is drawing nearer and nearer. In such a critical period nothing would suit Imperialism better than passivity and division in the national ranks. This alone would enable Imperialism to successfully yoke India to its war-chariot. Our National leadership, instead of preparing the country for the impending struggle, instead of forging greater unity in our own ranks, continues to sit with folded hands and instead of preparing for an offensive against Imperialism in carrying through an offensive against the Left, i.e., splitting the unity of the National Front and suppressing the forces of struggle. This suicidal policy can only lead to the strengthening of Imperialism and our collapse before it even without a struggle. This is the supreme danger facing our national movement.

### Conflict within the Front

The discontent against the Right is growing by leaps and bounds. Large sections of the rank and file, not only of the Left, but even those who the other day were under the influence of the Right, are going "Left". Their resentment against the disruptive policy of the Right is assuming the character of an elemental revolt which can be characterised as — *the Right is fighting us instead of Imperialism, let us struggle to throw out the Right then, that will clear the path for struggle against Imperialism*. In short, we are being faced with the prospect of fratricidal struggle *within* the National Front rather than fraternal unity of the Front against Imperialism.

The Left parties and groups stand divided and, therefore, politically weak and ineffective and unable to give a positive direction to the discontent of the rank and file. Unable to unite themselves they are far away from being able to unify the forces of the nation. Thus the offensive from the Right coupled with the inability of the Left to successfully overcome it has created a

situation which the opportunist and factious elements are able to exploit under slogan of *struggle against the Right*.

### **Unify the Left**

We communists saw what was coming and as early as September 1938 at the time of Delhi A.I.C.C. gave the call for the unity of the Left, through a Left Bloc, to unitedly check the policy of drift and disruption by positively implementing the fighting programme of the Congress and thus generating a movement which would be able to maintain the unity of the Congress and also lead it onward to struggle.

At that time and subsequently several leading comrades of the C.S.P. took the stand that organisation of the Left itself was disruptive, it would evoke greater offensive from the Right and would inevitably become an anti-Right combination. We argued with them long and patiently that if we had pleaded for the unity of the Left against the Right that would be disruptive of national unity—Left disruption as a blind reaction to Right disruption. On the other hand, we were pleading for the unity of the Left as unity of those Congressmen who stood *consistently* for the policy of unity and struggle. We argued, *refusal to unite the Left meant refusal to resist Right disruptive policy, to fight for the unity of the Congress, to strengthen the forces of struggle, which would lead ultimately to capitulation before British Imperialism and growing disintegration and wholesale demoralisation in the national ranks.*

Subsequent events bore us out. The events at Tripuri and Calcutta A.I.C.C. disclosed the ruthlessness of the Right and the inability of a disunited Left to move the majority of Congressmen.

### **Emergence of the Forward Bloc**

The inability of the socialists and communists to agree upon the necessity of uniting the whole Left led to the emergence of the Forward Bloc, a coming together of the Left nationalists to organise themselves and along with the socialists and communists. We welcomed the Forward Bloc as expressing the urge of the Left nationalists to unite themselves. But we pointed out that *by itself* it could not be the expression of Left unity for which a Left

conference representing *all Leftists*, and not only the Left nationalists, was necessary where the form of unity of the, various Left elements could be hammered out. We asked the leaders of the Forward Bloc to clarify their aims and political platform. The published platform of the forward Bloc was unexceptionable and in fact such as alone could be the aim of any genuine Left group. But the speeches and statements of some of its foremost leaders disclosed departures from the policy of United National Front.

### **Political Basis of left Unity**

There was light or loose talk about split in the congress. *We understood the need for the unity of the Left to struggle for maintaining the unity of the Congress itself.* To-day, Congress alone can be the organ of people's struggle against Imperialism. To split the congress is like butchering ourselves and giving up the struggle against Imperialism. It is the Right that is seeking to divide the Congress and squeezing out the Left. If the Left follows a similar course we will have struggle *within* the National Front and its final disruption.

Some leaders of the Forward Bloc talked about 'Fascism of the High Command', 'need of an alternative leadership', etc. Such statements express blind negative anti-Rightism. This at best is only reflecting the discontent of the rank and file with the present leadership. But doing this alone is not the task of a political leadership. It has to show the way out. *The present stalemate within the congress cannot be ended by organising an anti-Right struggle but by ourselves positively and concretely implementing the policy of unity and struggle and uniting the mass of Congressmen behind it. The offensive from the Right has to be resisted but this can not be done by launching a counter-offensive to throw out the Right but by the Left mobilising not only itself but a majority of Congressmen to defeat every manifestation of the policy of disruption and capitulation.*

To-day, the majority of Congressmen want a policy of struggle but they also have faith in the existing leadership. To advance the slogan of alternative leadership in such a position is only to help perpetuate the hold of the Right Wing over their own following and isolate the majority of Congressmen from the Left, i.e., the

fighters for the policy of unity and struggle. *To initiate an anti-Right struggle, therefore, does not check the Right but strengthens it.*

A national leadership reflects the correlation of forces within the national front. When it does not, it becomes a drag and a disruptive force. *What the situation demands to-day is a united leadership and not an exclusive homogeneous leadership as we have at present nor an alternative leadership as some Leftists desire.* A homogeneous leadership is acting as a brake and proving disruptive. An alternative leadership could only be established through disruption or remain an empty slogan. A truly representative national leadership to-day could only be a united leadership. This is what the Left has to fight for. An alternative leadership of the national movement and the overthrow of the old leadership only emerges when the masses, during the course of a *nation-wide* struggle. Through their own experience, get convinced of the necessity of the change by seeing the old leadership sabotaging or opposing the struggle. Before the struggle, to advance the slogan of a new leadership is not to draw the masses towards struggle but keep them away from it.

*These are the questions that politically divide the Left and there can be no organisational unity unless the political basis of Left unity is clearly defined and understood alike by all Leftists. We communists cannot unite with those to whom the struggle to maintain the unity of the Congress is not the first consideration, and which must necessarily lead to accepting and working for a united leadership, neither the present exclusive leadership nor a new alternative one.*

### **Organisational Form of Left Unity**

As regards the organisational form of Left unity, it could only be a Bloc and not a party. What is the difference between a *bloc* and a *party*? A bloc is a union of parties and groups while the basis of a party is individual membership. A bloc works on the basis of agreement while a party functions through majority voting. The Forward Bloc is attracting to itself Left Nationalists, and the only form in which they could unite with the Socialists and Communists was inside a Bloc and not as individuals inside a



Party. If the Forward Bloc was sought to be organised as a party they should not expect the Socialists and Communists to join it and thus in practice liquidate their own Party. A Socialist and Communist could not join the Forward Bloc as an individual if it was sought to be organised as a party for *that would be going back from Socialism to Left Nationalism*. There were points of unity and yet fundamental differences between the Left Nationalists, socialists and Communists and they could, therefore, be only united on the basis of a Bloc and not a Party.

### **C. S. P. Comes in**

So far an important section of the C. S. P. leadership was bitterly opposed to the Forward Bloc. The C. S. P. now agreed to a Left Conference to discuss the platform of Left consolidation and to the setting up of a Left coordinating committee. The C.S.P. through a joint statement of Com. Jaiprakash and myself has taken a big step towards Left unity. We, communists, approached the Forward Bloc leadership to discuss the joint Socialist offer but it has unfortunately not accepted it.

We argued on the basis of what had transpired during our discussions, that they did not see the difference between a Bloc and a party when they were thinking of decisions by majority and membership on an individual basis and that while we felt the need for a Left Bloc, we should not be expected to join a new Left Party and thus surrender our political and organisational independence. Further, even if they agreed to have a Bloc, would the Communists alone by joining it without the Socialists make it a Left Bloc? That would only be the unity of a section of the Left and not the whole Left. This would be calamitous in the interests of Left unity itself.

### **Meaning of Joint Socialist Offer**

We argued in vain that the proposal was much more than merely informal contact between Left Parties. For the first time we will have a joint Left fraction in the A.I.C.C. headed by the joint co-ordinating committee which will also plan and lead the mass campaigns in the country and thus act in practice as the united Executive of the Left. This was a tremendous advance on the present position and held out the prospects of much closer unity

in the near future. Socialists, Communists and Leftists represent the forces of struggle to-day. Their coming together will strengthen the existing, local and partial struggles. National political campaigns jointly initiated by them will be *effective* preparations for the coming nation-wide struggle and win growing numbers of Congressmen for participation in activities which will quicken the tempo of our movement so that a nation-wide struggle becomes possible. The prospect was struggle or submission. If the elements of struggle could be put together and made to participate in and prepare for struggle all together, the pressure of circumstance would itself drive them closer and closer together, when on the basis of their own experience, in the interest of the common struggle, they will seek and realise higher forms of unity. We, therefore, said let us start from an elementary stage of Left consolidation which can be *commonly agreed upon* by all and through the common work we will live down the present mutual suspicions and eliminate hostilities—and thus render possible greater and closer unity.

### **Disunity Continues**

The Forward Bloc leadership will either have complete unity within the Forward Bloc but no immediate steps towards unity and no even a Left coordination committee. No Party can have unity on its own terms and to demand this is to perpetuate disunity. Left disunity to-day would only intensify the Right offensive. This together with its consequent "Left" reaction will only please British Imperialism.

We regret that the Forward Bloc leadership has also turned down to-day the proposal of an all-embracing Left Conference of Socialists, Communists and Left Nationalists and has decided to go ahead with the Conference of the Forward Bloc alone.

Thus just when it seemed that chances of Left unity were brightest and when the demand for unity has become the loudest we remain disunited.

### **What Next?**

*We, Communists, would even now seek unity of the whole Left and keep contact both with the Forward Bloc and the C. S. P.*

*We hope there will not be mutual sniping and no efforts will be made to force unity, on one's own terms and thereby disrupt instead of unifying the Left. We would be willing to co-operate with the forward Bloc in every locality and province for joint work. In view of Left disunity it becomes doubly imperative that Socialist-Communist unity be speeded up so that the united Socialists may more effectively forge Left unity to prepare our people for the coming battle through the National Congress.*

The Forward Bloc in its Bombay Conference will no doubt discuss the whole problem thoroughly and we hope it will authoritatively adopt a political platform on the basis of which it may be possible for Socialists and Communists to co-operate with it and will not turn down, without further reconsideration, the offer of unity made by the Socialists and Communists.

*Time is a vital factor. The situation demands some sort of Left consolidation RIGHT NOW. The offensive from the Right is directed against us all, no Party of the Left can prepare our nation for the coming battle single-handed or by working in isolation from each other or at cross-purposes; the imperialist war drum is sounding louder and louder. If we fail to unite even now are we going forward or will it not be going down the abyss?*

## A.I.C.C. MUST DECLARE SUPPORT FOR WORKERS

**B. T. Ranadive**

Among the problems facing the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay will be the question of the Textile situation created by the steadily increasing offensive of the owners. Determined to force down wages under one excuse or another the Textile magnates have taken a lead in opening an all-round offensive on the ameliorative programme of the Congress Ministries. They are determined to take back the wage increase granted to the workers immediately after the Congress Ministries assumed power.

They are grumbling against New Provincial taxation. They protest against the anti-national Indo-British Pact and the duty on raw cotton. They plead depression in the Cotton trade. Armed with all these excuses they express their firm resolve to attack the meagre wages of the workers, the 12½ per cent increase granted to them after 12 years strenuous struggle, poverty and starvation.

The situation is so serious that in Bombay alone nearly 50,000 night-shift workers are on the streets. Lock-outs and closing of night shifts follow each other. In Ahmedabad also hundreds have already been thrown on the streets. Sholapur, Cawnpore, Jubbulpore and other Industrial Centres show the same offensive though in somewhat different form—Victimisation of active workers. Surreptitious wage cuts form the method in Cawnpore together with intensification of work. The same method more or less is being copied in Sholapur.

The offensive is an All-India one and there is no doubt that it is being planned deliberately in a concerted manner under the leadership of the Bombay and Ahmedabad Millowners.

### **Against Those Who Fed Them**

Thus a body of people who have made crores out of the nation's resolve for Swadeshi now threatens to throw thousands of their countrymen and their families to starvation and degradation. For it must be remembered that if there is any section which materially

benefitted by the boycott of British goods it was the Textile magnates of India alone. Who does not know of their fabulous profits in times of war. Who does not know that they went on making crores when the Nation was courting Jail, arrests and imprisonment during two Civil Disobedience movements and now they want to turn against those that fed and nursed them in order to guard their extra profits That is the way common to all vested interests Even when they were making fabulous profits they never cared to share their prosperity with the toiling workers in their factories Even when profits had reached as high as 300 per cent during war time the workers could not secure the wage increase without continuous struggle. On the other hand, they have always been eager to pass on the burden of every temporary crisis to the shoulders of the workers and in this they unscrupulously utilise the repressive machinery of the state to help them fatten themselves on the national discontent but unwilling to share the burden of the nation's progress—such has been their politics, their morality and their ethics

### **Unanimous Will To Resist**

But the owners are counting without their host The workers are not in a mood to take the challenge lying down Steadily and surely the anger and indignation of the workers is rising, the determination to resist the offensive at all costs is increasing The call given by the Girm Kamgar Union in Bombay in its rally of the 14th May is evoking tremendous response Textile Unions everywhere are enthusiastically supporting the proposal for an All India Textile Workers Conference to take concerted measures against the new drive Immediately after the Girm Kamgar Union rally the Cawnpore Mazdoor Sabha responded to the call and declared its readiness both for a conference and for immediate preparations for a General Strike On the 8th of June the representative council of the Nagpur Textile Labour Union passed a resolution warning the owners against their offensive, asking the workers to be prepared for any eventuality and demanding legislation to curb the offensive of the owners. On the 17th of June the Girm Kamgar Union of Sholapur passed a resolution in its Managing committee demanding an immediate All India Textile Workers Conference and announcing a programme of preparations, meeting and demonstrations warning the owners that the workers would not

fail to launch a strong and successful counter-offensive. The same week the Mill Kamdar Union of Ahmedabad passed a similar resolution and announced to the world that even in the City of class collaboration the workers counter-offensive would not fail to materialise. And finally, N. M. Joshi the veteran labour leader and the President of the last Textile Conference has announced his intention to call an All India Textile Delegates Conference to consider the crisis in the Textile Industry and the situation created by closing of night shifts and increasing lock outs.

Labour has spoken unanimously. Communists, radicals, and the moderate T. U. leaders all see the necessity of meeting the offensive and setting afoot immediate preparations. Never was Labour more unanimous, never were its ranks more united and solid, never did it speak with more confidence and realisation of its strength.

### **Popular Interests At Stake**

But this time Labour is not fighting a lonely battle. Its voice is being heard in the Congress Committees for coming out as defenders of the just interests of labour and breaking down the old traditions of isolation. On the 20th of May the Provincial Committee of the United Provinces passed a resolution noting with concern that the employers in some places have launched a fresh offensive against Labour in the shape of wage cuts, rationalisation and widespread dismissals of workers. The Committee pleaded for legislation guaranteeing recognition of Labour Unions, right of collective bargaining, minimum wages and social insurance, public labour exchange in important industrial towns and providing against arbitrary dismissals.

On the 20th of June the F and G Ward Congress committees of Bombay passed a unanimous resolution on the same lines asking the Congress Ministries to intervene in time before the major conflict becomes unavoidable. The Committees noted that the anti-national Indo-British Pact and the duty on raw cotton have to some extent impaired the competitive capacity of the Indian Industries and, therefore, requested the A.I.C.C. to organise a complete boycott of British goods in the interests of Indian Industry and Labour.

Thus steadily the consciousness is rising that Labour is not fighting its sectional battle but a battle in which the interests of the people as a whole are at stake.

But the consciousness is not universal. All Congress Committees and Congressmen have not yet realised the grave issues at stake. What is involved in the Textile Crisis is not merely the standard of living of workers but the political future of the Congress Ministries. The attack on wages is an offensive against the entire programme of the Congress Ministries, is and a part of the General revolt of the vested interests against the democratic programme. It constitutes a bid for turning the Congress Ministries into an instrument of the anti-mass policy of the Capitalists and Zamindars. Its political implications are, therefore, very great.

### **Challenge To Congress**

It directly challenges the Congress Ministries because they were instrumental in granting the wage increase after a thoroughgoing and searching examination made by the Textile Inquiry committees. It is, therefore, an offensive against the mature decision of the democratic ministries. It is economically unjustifiable because the wage increase has not led to the present deterioration. During the entire period between 1938 and 1939 when the increase was in operation Industry was prosperous as never before. This was admitted by no less a person than the president of the Bombay Millowners Association.

Mr J. C. Setalvad the President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber himself described the situation as follows: "The total reduction in production in cloth amounted to 14 p.c., 4 p.c. being the effect of the Raw Cotton duty, 5 p.c. the effect of additions to wages and property tax, and 5 p. c. as a result of the Indo-British Trade Agreement." Wage-increase and provincial taxation account for 5 p. c. reduction only and the measures of the Central Government account for 9 p.c. The real grievance, therefore, is against the Indo-British Pact, and its incidence cannot be removed by attacking wages.

The attack is further indefensible because the Enquiry Committees suggested only a very moderate increase which could be financed out of half the extra profits made in 1937, since it constitutes only an attempt to secure extra profits over and above normal trading profits.

The temporary depression of which so much is being made cannot be put forward as an excuse for forcing down the wages.

Workers cannot be made the victims of every passing depression, the millowners cannot be allowed to cut the wages for the sake of extra profits. Moreover, the extent of depression is deliberately being exaggerated to make out a case for lowering the standard of living.

The real aim of the Millowners is to escape the burden of the ameliorative programme and keep the industry safe for their own profits. They do not want to share any burden for improving the condition of workers whose toil makes it possible for them to roll in luxury. They do not want to share the burden of the prohibition programme—they would not allow their profits to be cut for the sake of the nation at all. It is a revolt to escape the burden for national progress and amelioration.

### **The Real Villain**

Besides, it is a revolt provoked by the autocratic Central Government which always conspires to transform the Congress Ministries into defenders of Imperialist Law and Order. The anti-national Indo-British pact and the duty on raw cotton have no doubt placed disabilities on the Indian Industry. The vested interests want to get over these by passing on the burden to the shoulders of the workers, and thus torpedoing the Labour programme of the Congress. Imperialism would be delighted with such a development since thereby the Ministries would forfeit their last claim to the confidence and support of Labour. In short, it is a treacherous attempt to make the workers pay for encouraging British Industry: *a sinister Imperialist attempt to blow up the Congress programme for the sake of Lancashire. What the Central Government could not do by direct pressure is now being done through anti-national economic measures.*

*The offensive is a double challenge both from imperialism as well as the vested interests.*

### **Congress Ministries Wrongly Attack Workers**

- *Very few Congressmen and organisations have realised this. The ~~Min~~ on the other hand are complacently falling into this ~~trap~~ one of the Ministries has uttered a grave ~~charge~~ owners or to the Central Government. ~~programme~~ programme to be nibbled at bit by ~~the~~ demoralisation and disunity.*



Having lost their bearings they are talking of taking an offensive against the workers themselves. Private circulars of the U.P. Government asked for taking drastic steps against the Communists who are in the forefront of the Trade Union struggle. A letter recently addressed to the Mazdoor Sabha of Cawnpore held the Cawnpore workers responsible for the developing unrest, though the Government fully knew that the owners had broken their plighted word more often than once. The U. P. Government further intends to introduce a trades Disputes Bill on the lines of the Bombay Act and curtail the liberties of the Trade Union movement. The Hon. Mr. Giri in Madras voices the same opinion. Instead of warning the Millowners he chastises the workers for their militancy and preparedness to lead the offensive.

In Bombay the Congress Ministry has banned stay-in-strikes recently. It allowed the Chalisgaon Millowners to break an agreement arrived at with the Maharashtra Provincial congress officials, ordered lathi charges on the workers and permitted the owners to break the strike under the specious plea of defending law and order.

In Bombay itself the Ministry has refused to intervene in the Phoenix Mill dispute and refused to bring pressure on the Millowners to open negotiations with the Girmi Kamgar Union. On the other hand, workers were threatened with tear gas and armed police.

***Railway Workers Rally*****20,000 STRONG !****FIRST VICTORIES : GREATER EFFORTS**

The Railway Workers of Bombay have set an example which must be followed by other Railway Workers throughout India with a view to secure their various demands. At Madras, on the first of May, the All India Railwaymen's Federation decided to place before the Railway Board some of the important demands for final decision. Accordingly those demands were placed before the Railway Board at Simla on the 19th May. Due to some difficulties the Railway board decided to meet the Railwaymen's Federation in Bombay at a special meeting. This meeting was fixed to be held on the 20th July. At this meeting the Railway Board was to give its final reply to the various demands placed before the Board by the Railwaymen's Federation.

**United Effort**

On the Eve of the meeting the Railway Workers of Bombay decided to demonstrate their solidarity and support to the demands. In accordance with the resolution of the A.I. R. F. at Madras the Railway Workers of Bombay had Formed a Co-ordinating Committee, 'This Committee' included in it all the Railway unions of Bombay, Viz the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union, the B.P.T. Railway Workers Union, The B.B.C.I. Railwaymen's Union, the B.B.C.I. Railway Employees' Union, and the G.I.P. Accounts Staff Union. This Committee is conducting joint activities on agreed programme. Accordingly they fixed the 19th July as the day for the Demonstration.

Under the auspices of this committee a vigorous campaign was carried on. Hundreds of meetings on all the railways were held. Several handbills were issued. Vigorous propaganda through the public and Union papers was carried on. Most effective use was

made of a lorry fitted with loud-speakers. All the active workers on B.B.C.I., G.I.P. and other railways met several times and conducted a very systematic campaign to make the 19th July a success.

### **Gretat Success**

Every Railway worker began talking of 19th July. In the workshops, at stations, at railway quarters, the only important topic among the Railway workers was the 19th July, 7 demands put forward by the Railwaymen's Federation, and the meeting between the Railway Board and the Federation.

*From 3 p.m. on the 19th July batches of Railway workers from various parts began to appear on the scene. Several workers who were not on duty at the time enrolled their services voluntarily to make the demonstration a success.*

At 5-30 p.m. the time scheduled for people to assemble at Kamagar Maidan, Parel, the workers began to assemble in large numbers. First came the procession of 4000 Railway Workers from G.I.P. Railway Parel Work Shops. Then came the powerful procession of brave fighters of Matunga Workshop of G.I.P. Railway which numbered 3000. Then came the batch of 100 B.B.C.I. workmen from Virar, a place nearly 35 miles away from Bombay. Then came the procession of B.B.C.I. Railway Workshop. From Bombay Central, Kurla, Kalyan and various other places batches of workers assembled in large numbers at the Kamagar Maidan.

A huge meeting of 15,000 Railway Workers was held. At this meeting, Messrs. Khedgikar, M.A. Khan, B. T. Ranadive, Jogalekar, and others spoke. After the meeting the procession started. Hundreds of Red Flags, with several slogans, and hundred torch-lights, the procession began to march.

Thundering shouts of 'LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF RAILWAY WORKERS' roused the whole population. The spectacle was really inspiring. 15,000 Railway Workers all of whom had worked that day of not less than 8 to 10 hours and who had not taken their meal and therefore hungry, were marching unmindful of personal inconvenience and sufferings.

They walked 8 miles through the crowded localities of Bombay reaching Azad Maidan at Bori Bandar at 8-30 p.m. Already a huge

audience of nearly 5000 Railway workers had assembled there. Added to this these 15,000 a huge meeting of 20,000 Railway workers was held.

The meeting was addressed by Messrs. N.M Joshi, J.M. Mehta, R.A. Khedgikar, S S Mirajkar, M.A. Khan and other leaders who had come from outside Bombay. *All the speakers warned the Railway Board that if their demands were not granted the united railwaymen shall prepare for a general strike on all railways. The railway workers gave their assent to this declaration of the speakers by thunderous applause.*

This was the first demonstration of its kind in the history of the railway workers movement. The Bombay railway workers and the Coordination Committee consisting of different Railway Unions in Bombay deserve congratulations for the powerful demonstration they organised.

### **For 21st August**

*The Railway Board agreed to concede certain demands though on main question they are still hesitating. The General council of the All India Railwaymen's Federation has decided to observe 21st of August as an all India Provident Fund Day. Also it has warned the Railway Board that the demand of provident fund must be granted.*

Already the Railway Workers of Bombay have started to hold their propaganda meetings to make this day a success. The G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union has resolved to enrol thousands of more members before 21st of August to indicate their determination to consolidate the new enthusiasm among the workers and to inform the Board of the determination of the railway workers to secure their demands.

## KISAN MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

**M. A. Rasul**

If in Bengal one popular movement can claim to have a brighter future than others it is the Kisan movement. Today it has been elevated to a position of strength and responsibility which has hardly ever marked a movement of three years' standing. No other movement has secured the widespread and enthusiastic support which the peasants have given to the Bengal Kisan Sabha.

With an humble beginning in 1936 the Kisan Sabha movement has to-day reached a stage which has become a nightmare to the present ministry: the peasant votes on which it will have to depend in the next general election for the retention of its present office will in all probability slip away from its control and be cast in favour of people none too friendly with it.

### **Government Illusion**

The ministry however sometimes pretends to think that the Kisan Sabha movement is the handiwork of 'a handful of outside agitators' or a mere child's play into which ignorant peasants have been lured by hollow and high-sounding words of hope.

It is utter stupidity to think that you can raise a popular agitation and develop and expand it at your will while there are no genuine grievances behind it to back you up with popular support. If the Kisan movement in Bengal is marching from strength to strength it is because the Kisan homes are full of distress and destitution and the Government and vested interests hardly pay heed to this fact.

### **200 Crores Indebtedness**

The two most important factors for our consideration in Bengal are the credit and the land system. The question of agricultural credit vitally touches the interest of the peasantry. Roughly calculated the agricultural indebtedness of Bengal will amount to Rs. 20 crores. Then add to it all the arrear rent and interest on it and you have the total indebtedness of about 200 crores. The official bill

now before the legislature for controlling the credit and money-lending system is a mockery.

The peasants would like the whole amount to be written off so that they might begin their life afresh. Otherwise how could they expect to live with the landlords' and money-lenders' men constantly knocking at their doors ? The Kisan Sabha has its natural sympathy for this claim.

But not so the Zamindars and the 'mahajans' nor the Government. They are of course for maintaining vested interests. The former think that they will be the losers if the peasants' claim is accepted. The Government is afraid of another claim, namely, the supply of cheap credit by Government.

### **Decrepit Land-system**

Then there is the land-system under the Permanent Settlement. This is at the root of all the evils that have degenerated and demoralised the entire social life of Bengal, the worst sufferer being the peasantry who wants abolition of the system lock, stock, and barrel. Instead of accepting this demand the Government has appointed a Land Revenue Commission, popularly known as the Flood Commission, obviously with a view to concede some small relief to the impoverished and oppressed peasantry. It may be noted here that the recent amendment to the Bengal Tenancy Act has been of little benefit to the poorest tenants who are the most numerous.

*Circumstanced as above the peasant of Bengal are realising more and more that nothing short of a prolonged fight against their class enemies, the vested interests like the landlords and money-lenders, as well as the Government which supports them, can bring them real and permanent relief.*

### **Kisan Sabha as Organiser**

*Here the Kisan Sabha plays its part to fulfil the mission of organising the peasants on the basis of their needs and grievances, of leading them in their struggles and of finding temporary relief for them wherever possible, so long as permanent relief is not secured.*

The importance of the movement lies in the struggles that the peasants of various localities launch and carry on under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha. Acute grievances of the peasantry against the Zamindars (landlords) and money-lenders are never wanting in

Bengal. The Government is not benevolent either; its short-sighted policy is guided by little consideration of the deplorable conditions of the peasantry.

These grievances lead the peasants to fight for redress, spontaneously, but since the Kisan Sabha came into existence the initiative has often been taken by it.

*Struggles have been started and conducted either with complete or partial success. Rarely there has been an occasion when a struggle has met with total failure. Marches and demonstrations with Kisan Sabha slogans form parts of such struggles, besides passive resistance and jail-going.*

### Repression

Scores of peasants and peasant-workers are at present rotting in jail because they participated in a fight against a most unjust irrigation tax. And these unfortunate comrades have not only not been classified, they have not been allowed by the 'popular' ministry to use mosquito-nets in jails which are infested with millions of these extremely injurious vermins, nor to enjoy other rights usually conceded to political prisoners. (Consequently a hunger strike has been just resorted to).

Lately important Kisan Sabha workers have been prosecuted under Sections 124A and 153A. I wonder if this is the beginning of a wider campaign of repression. The policy of repression has been pursued by the Government wherever an agitation—not necessarily directed against the Government—reached an embarrassing stage. Different provisions of law—IPC, CPC, BCLA—have been made use of as so many weapons of suppression and promulgated in districts like Burdwan, Birbhum, 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Mymensingh and Bakerganj.

*Has this policy been able to stop the growing discontent so palpable in many of the districts? Surely not. It has at most served as a temporary check. While the ultimate effect has often been only to deepen the hostility of the people towards an administration which takes recourse to measures of repression rather than relief.*

### Stock-Taking

The Malda session of the Provincial Kisan Conference held in May offered us an opportunity to take stock of the movement of the entire province. Formal and informal discussions led us to the

definite conclusion that we are now passing through a stage which more than ever calls for intensive organisational as distinct from agitational work. This requires planned and coordinated activity on the part of the district and local units of the Sabha.

### **Partial Struggles**

At this stage local or partial struggles count most. These we have had in a number of places but so far we have not been able to pool all our provincial strength and energy for conducting any one of these. We hope in near future to increase the strength of our movement and intensify these struggles so that the conditions of each specific issue may be surveyed and studied and proper action taken on a provincial scale when necessary.

### **Kisan Volunteers**

The real organisational work, on the basis of local struggles, needs the organisation of a strong and regular volunteer corps for the province. We have already taken a decision that in each district committee a portfolio shall be provided for a volunteer organiser. He will help the union committees, the lowest units in the hierarchy, each to organise a volunteer unit of at least 25 recruited mostly if not entirely from among the peasantry. The Provincial Sabha's Volunteer Secretary and his assistants will render all possible help to the subordinate bodies in this direction.

Our recent experience of a volunteer corps, of about 300 peasant youths, recruited and trained on the occasion of the last Provincial Conference, has been so successful and encouraging that its example is expected to be followed everywhere. The work has been already started in several districts, to the dismay of the present ministry.

*In spite of all the propaganda that is being carried on in the province against the Kisan movement by forces of reaction which support Government and find favour with it, the discontent among peasantry, both Muslim and Hindu is visibly increasing. This is due, to the fact that the present ministry has failed to redeem the election pledges, given to the peasants by parties to which most of its members belong, in regard to the tenancy and money-lending legislation.*



## SUMMER SCHOOLS IN ANDHRA

*During the months of May and June 1939 ten Summer Schools of Politics and Economics were conducted in the Andhra including the Nidubrolu Kisan School under the Principalship of Com Ranga. These Schools were spread in 6 Districts namely North Vizag, East Godavari, Kistna, Guntur, Kurnool and Anantapur, and attended by about 400 young men and women.*

This is not the first time for the Andhra to organise Summer Schools. Since 1934 Com Ranga has been conducting every year the Kisan School at Nidubrolu. It was in 1937 that the Summer School was conducted at Kottapattam in May, under the joint auspices of the Andhra C S P, the Provincial Youth League and the Students' Federation. But it was banned by the Interim Ministry, and about 80 students, including girls defied the order for which they were brutally assaulted by the police. In May 1938, nearly 250 students rallied to the Mantenavaripalem School which was organised under the auspices of the Provincial C S P. The School lasted for full one month, during which time famous Indian Socialists and Communists and Kisan Sabhaites came to teach the students.

### Character Of These Schools

This year, the Provincial C S P had passed a resolution to the effect that Summer Schools should be organised on *Taluk and District scales* and that more stress should be laid on *practical problems* facing the Socialist, Kisan and Student organisers than on theoretical questions. A syllabus was also prepared for the guidance of organisers. Accordingly, three Schools were organised at Nidubrolu, Pallekona and Amaravati in the Guntur District, one at Itchapuram in the North Vizag District, two at Pamarru and Tunikipadu in the Kistna District, one at Mypad in the Nellore District, one at Kalvabugga in Kurnool District, one at Hindupur in Anantapur District, and one at Antarvedipalem in the East Godavari District. All the Schools were organised by the District

and Taluk Congress Socialist Parties, Kisan Sabhas and Students' Organisations, excepting the one at Kalvabugga which was organised by the District Congress Committee, controlled by the Right-wing Congressmen.

*The District Congress Committees of North Vizag. Guntur, Nellore, Chittoor, Cudappah and Anantapur joined hands with the Socialists and Kisan Sabha workers and contributed much for the success of the Schools. It is only in the Kistna District, which is dominated by an ultra-Right wing Congress Committee, that neither help nor sympathy was extended.*

*The Schools at Itchapuram, Mypad, Kalvabugga and Hindupur ran for a month each, while the remaining six ran for a fortnight each. About 80 per cent. of the 400 students were activists, working on various mass Fronts. The Tunikapad School attracted nearly 30 youngmen from the neighbouring Hyderabad state*

### **Syllabus**

Coming to the syllabus, it covered various subjects like the History of the Indian Nationalist Movement beginning from 1857, the Federal Scheme, as adumbrated in the Government of India Act of 1935, the Indian Kisan Movement, the Labour Movement, the States' Peoples' Struggles, the International Situation, Fundamental Principles of Socialism, the History of the Russian Revolution. In almost all the Schools the necessity and meaning of the United Front was emphasised. It was explained how the Congress has been fast becoming a United Front organisation but how the Right-wing leaders have been preventing it to develop in that direction.

Whereas at Kottapattam and Mantenavaripalem regular lessons on Politics, Political Economy and Philosophy were given, these subjects have been given up this year in all the schools. *Debates and Study Circles* were conducted in almost all the Schools, and students participated in them enthusiastically. *Public meetings*, too were held to celebrate the various Days, such as the May Day, the Lahore Kisan Satyagraha Day (4th June 1939), the Munagala Satyagraha Day (11th June 1939), etc.

*In all the Schools students took active interest in games, sports etc. In each School an instructor was giving rudiments of Military training to the inmates.*

## **Self-Criticism**

But how far the purpose of the C. S. P. resolution was fulfilled is doubtful. Except at Mypad (Nellore District), Itchapuram and Pallekona, care was not taken to go to the neighbouring villages and give political education to the villagers. Of these it was only at Mypad that each local problem was discussed in a detailed way and decision taken. Organisational problems facing the Leftists in each District or Taluk were also discussed, except at Mypad. An important drawback of the Schools was that knowledge of the various rights and privileges which the peasants and labourers are entitled to under the existing Statutes was not given.

Speaking generally, the Schools attracted a good number of students, active as well as otherwise, to one place, and gave them training in collective life and comradeship. Those C. S. P. members who knew rudiments of Socialism and Communism learnt about the tactics and strategy of Revolutions, and the tasks of the Indian Socialists in the coming National Democratic Revolution. Some could get the benefit of extending their knowledge about various subjects, and of comparing how far the tactics they had been following were correct.

## BAN ON BOSE MUST GO !

### Communists Call to Congressmen

The Working Committee by hitting out mercilessly and ruthlessly at Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose has delivered a serious blow to the unity of our people.

It is not the victimisation of an individual Congress leader but a bureaucratic attack against a whole section of the National Congress, a section representing revolutionary and virile forces of our Nation.

The National leadership is grievously mistaken if it thinks it has strengthened the Congress by this decision, by this effort to crush "indiscipline and revolt against the Congress "

*On the other hand, by taking this step at a critical moment when the world is on the brink of war and when our nation itself will have to come to grips in a final conflict with Imperialism, the Working Committee has only encouraged the disruptive forces within and without the Congress, who pin their faith on the sabotage of struggle and on compromise with Imperialism on the issues of Federation and War.*

The Working Committee has taken a mechanically formal and disciplinarian view of the whole question and in doing so it has missed the political kernel of the matter

### The Crux of the Matter

True, the resolutions in question were passed by a majority at the A. I. C. C. session. But is it not also true that they met with a determined and united opposition from a considerable minority of the house ? And why ? Because these resolutions did not stand by themselves. They represented a link in a whole line of policy which was meeting with a growing opposition in the Congress and the country.

That line is the one which is being persistently popularised during the last 3 years by Gandhiji in his *Harijan*. It is the line of a division of labour between the ministers and the masses. The

ministries were to perform the alchemistic experiment of transforming the dross of the British Constitution into the gold of Indian freedom, and the masses of Congressmen were to restrict themselves to the constructive programme and to create a non-violent atmosphere suitable to the success of the experiment.

It was a line of curbing the fighting power of the working class and peasant masses, of refusing to unify those forces with the Congress, of refusing to weld the Congress into a weapon of United Front struggle as the Congress presidential addresses of 1936 and 1937 visualised.

It was a line which repudiated the unity of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle as the Congress Election Manifesto visualised it, and refused to prepare the nation for a country-wide offensive by unifying the fight of the people in the States and in the British provinces against Federation and War and for the calling of a victorious Constituent Assembly of free India.

### Conflict of Policies

The conflict in the A. I. C. C. on those resolutions was in reality a conflict between *two distinct political lines*, between the line of constitutionalism, of avoiding struggle, of seeking for a compromise on the strength of sheer constitutional pressure and the line of revolutionary unity of all forces of struggle, especially, those of the organised workers and peasants under the banner of the Congress and of launching a decisive all-round fight at this critical juncture.

It is well known that since Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose stood as a candidate for the presidential election in the beginning of this year against the wishes of the national leadership he has associated himself with the alternative political line of all-round unity and all-round struggle. He took a decisive stand against constitutionalism and allied himself with the forces of workers' and peasants' struggles, with Socialists and Communists and stood for uniting these forces with those of Left Nationalism in an endeavour to achieve the broader unity of the people under the Congress for a decisive fight?

*The blow against Bose, therefore, can only be interpreted as the determination of the Working Committee to completely suppress the considerable minority in the Congress which represents new forces of mass organisation and struggle.*

Gandhiji himself recognised that the bulk of Congressmen were losing faith in his constructive programme. Gandhiji knows well that the bulk of Congressmen disagree with his dictum that an allround struggle should not be launched for fear of violence. Recently he suggested in *Harijan* that this central issue be thrashed out in a special session of the A. I. C. C.

Gandhiji admits that the choice between the conflicting lines which are being posed before the Nation must be made by the A. I. C. C. We say it must be made by the entire membership of the Congress. Let the issues be formulated, let them be discussed by the conferences of primary members, by primary committees and district committees. Let the coming delegates' elections be fought round this issue and then let the full session of the Congress take the decision on it.

### **A Bureaucratic Bludgeon**

A mighty democratic organisation like the Congress could not function in any other way. But our Working Committee thinks otherwise. It wants to suppress the minority view by using the bludgeon of disciplinary action. It has given the broad hint to the Provincial Executives to follow its lead and debar the minority leaders who participated in the 9th July meetings from being delegates for the Congress for 3 years. *What we are faced with is not a democratic decision over the vital political issue of the conflict which is raging within the Congress but a bureaucratic steam-rolling of the minority view.* They got a "homogeneous" Working Committee at Calcutta—now their heart is set on getting a completely homogeneous Congress at the coming annual session.

It is Imperialism—our enemy who will be pleased with this decision. The Working Committee has taken other important decisions. We are going to resist imperialist war preparations. Our Ministries have been ordered to resign instead of carrying out war measures shows our displeasure at the preparations to impose Federation by refusing to allow our members to attend the present extended central legislature.

But side by side with this fighting gesture you have launched an attack, a coercive measure against a part of the Congress. You have shown your willingness to suppress those forces of struggle with which you swore united front in 1936-37.

## An Invitation To Compromise

We have bared our teeth towards the enemy—but at the same time weakened the arm of unity with which to smite him. Will not the enemy laugh? “Congress will not bite perhaps it will beg”—Will not the enemy draw this insulting inference?

By accompanying a fighting gesture against Imperialism by a vicious attack against the Left, the Working Committee appears as if it is tendering its *bona fides* to the enemy. “We are determined to resist War and Federation, but we can equally firmly hold in check forces of revolutionary struggle.” *This is an invitation to compromise. What it will lead to is further aggression by imperialism and disruption of our own forces.*

## Reverse The Disruptive Decision

There are serious implications of the action against Sjt. Bose. But the Leftists, Socialists and Communists will not be provoked. They are not going to play the game of the splitters. It is their task to achieve unity of the people and of the Congress for a decisive struggle. We are confident of our growing power and influence. It is based on the growing political consciousness of the masses—born in the innumerable working class and peasant struggles which are taking place throughout India including the States.

We call upon all Left Congressmen, Socialists and Communists, to re-double their efforts in enrolling Congress members, in conducting a mass campaign among the primary members of the Congress for uniting the entire Congress behind the policy of launching a nation-wide struggle against Federation and War as indicated in the Tripuri resolution on National Demands.

*The primary Congress members must assert themselves. They must send such delegates to the next Congress as will reverse this disruptive decision and achieve unity of the Congress, of the leadership and of the people for a final decisive fight.*

P.C. Joshi  
Ajoy Ghosh

G. Adhikari  
R. D. Bharadwaj  
12th August, 1939.

## MOBILISE FOR RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

Sharaf Athar Ali

*From the 7th of July to the 3rd of August, for full 28 days, 89 political prisoners in the Dum Dum and Alipore Central Jails of Bengal were forced to wage a desperate battle against immense odds for their liberty.*

For two whole years, the fate of thousands of political prisoners has been in the forefront of our people's fight against the suppression of democratic and civil liberties. Two years ago, millions of our people were stirred to their depths when our valiant comrades in the remote Andamans undertook their historic hunger-strike. Since then upto the present moment, the issue of the release of all political prisoners has deeply agitated the country. So vast and tremendous was the volume of the nation's protest on the occasion of the Andamans hunger-strike that the Central Government and its provincial henchmen were forced to repatriate them.

But that episode only marked the first step in the movement for the unconditional release of thousands of political prisoners who were rotting in imperialist dungeons, for the sole crime of having served in the country's cause of freedom.

Following upon the repatriation of the Andamans prisoners, the insistent pressure of the people's extra-parliamentary movement enabled the popular Ministries in the Congress provinces to fulfil their pledges in the matter of the release of all political prisoners : but not so in those provinces which were dominated by anti-Congress Ministries. This was particularly the case in Bengal, which had fallen a prey to a rabidly communal and reactionary Ministry. The Huq Ministry, which relied for its strength not on the democratic masses of the people but on the landlords and the foreign bourgeoisie, was dead set against the release of political prisoners or the extension of civil liberties. Neither the sufferings of the prisoners, nor the country-wide agitation for their release and



for the widening of civil liberties, nor its own election promises would move it. Thus it came about that Bengal, with thousands of detenus and political prisoners convicted by special tribunals in earlier circumstances, became the storm centre of democratic struggle for civil liberties.

*The Andamans hunger-strike and the vast campaign which accompanied it, the success of the people's agitation in the Congress provinces, the resignation of the U.P. and Behar Ministries on the eve of the Haripura Session of the Congress gave a tremendous fillip to the Campaign for the release of political prisoners generally, and in Bengal, in particular. The whole province was swept by vast demonstrations and an avalanche of protest meetings, added to by a wave of hunger-strikes in the several jails—one such hunger-strike leading to the martyrdom of Harendranath Munshi in the Dacca Jail on the 30th January 1938.*

The movement then attained such heights that Mahatma Gandhi was induced to put himself at its head. In consonance with his wishes and on his assurance that he would be able to secure the release of all prisoners by the 13th of April 1939, the mass movement and the hunger-strikes were made to cease.

During March-April 1938, he opened negotiations with the Government, twice personally visiting the Governor, and conferring several times with the Bengal Ministers. Subsequently, he carried on the negotiations through correspondence and later still deputed Sjt. Subhas Bose who was then the Rashtrapati, to serve as his intermediary. Some detenus were released in this manner. But after 6 or 7 months the negotiations broke down completely because the Bengal Government would not commit itself to the release of some hundreds of political prisoners still remaining.

*Meanwhile in accordance with Gandhiji's wishes there had been no agitation, no mass movement and it soon became clear that it was precisely this factor which had emboldened the Hug Ministry to eventually decide on keeping the remaining batch behind the bars for its own purposes of curtailing the civil liberties of the democratic masses. On the contrary, it continued to increase repressive measures against the rising Congress, Kisan, Mazdoor and Student movements.*

Once again agitation flared up. November 20th, 1938, was

observed as the All-Bengal Political Prisoners' Day all over the province demanding the release of the remaining politicals and condemning the Ministry. Each day the conditions of the prisoners who had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, several for life, were getting worse. Disease played havoc causing deaths and suicides. The prisoners were constantly subjected to petty tyrannies at the hands of the jail authorities; they were kept isolated from their friends and relatives whose letters to them more often than not remained undelivered. In early November 250 politicals in the Alipore Central and Dum Dum jails resorted to a 3 days hunger-strike as a protest against a number of grievances.

In January 1939, after further shillyshallying the Bengal Government set up an Advisory Committee to examine and recommend cases to the Provincial Government for release. But so slow and dubious was the procedure of this Committee that Sdys. Sarat Bose and Lalit Chandra Das were forced to resign on May 31st last because they felt that the majority of the Committee were merely serving as tools of the Ministry. "*It was clear to us,*" said Messrs. Bose and Das, "*that Government were not prepared to release all prisoners no matter how favourable the atmosphere was.*"

It now became evident that Gandhiji's technique of trying to change the heart of the Ministry, his eschewing of mass struggle had proved quite useless. His time-limit providing upto the 13th April 1939 had expired long ago; but Gandhiji in the light of his method refused to give the call for mass struggle, a struggle of the whole people, as the only remaining alternative. On the contrary, he repeated his appeal to the Bengal Government to keep alive their "conciliatory" spirit and to re-invite the two Congressmen to serve on the Committee; he also counselled the prisoners not to go on hunger-strike.

[ Recently in an article in the *Harijan* he has made a vicious attack on the use of the hunger-strike weapon and has made the dangerous suggestion to the Working Committee to include steps against its use in its arsenal of disciplinary action. Thus he leads the anti-struggle attack even to the individual sphere of action of Congressmen.]

*The situation, however, had already become too galling for the*

*prisoners to bear, It was clear to them that Gandhiji's method had failed and it was necessary to draw afresh directly the country's attention to themselves and to the entire question of civil liberties. Thus after appealing for the people's support and for the support of the nation's leaders they launched on their determined struggle to the death.*

*The response to their appeal was immediate. Simultaneously with the start of the hunger-strike the sympathy of the entire people was aroused. Congress organisations, workers, kisans, students and women came out on the streets and squares in their tens of thousands to demand the immediate and unconditional release of the prisoners, condemning the Huq Ministry. Scores of meetings were held daily in Calcutta and the Mofussil areas. The Bengal Congress Committee and its district and town and other committees whole-heartedly conducted a raging and tearing campaign from day to day, observing the 15th of July as a province-wide Political Prisoners' Release Day. Thousand of students of every grade, as the most fervent and enthusiastic elements conducted a vigorous campaign, they also observed the 19th of July as a Day for all the Students of Bengal under the auspices of the Bengal Students Federation. There were several mass rallies of the workers and kisans in Calcutta and in the rural areas. All glory to the thousands of the women of Bengal and the girl students who participated actively in the campaign ! During the whole period of the strike every section of the democratic masses came out in its thousands to condemn the Bengal Ministry, and to support the demand for unconditional and immediate release of the prisoners.*

*While thus the tremendous tempo of popular feeling afforded a splendid opportunity for achieving its object, the national leadership under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi and in accordance with its own policy of drift and compromise and of anti-struggle, while paradoxically enough recognising the justice and urgency of the political prisoners cause, condemned the hunger-strike and refused to raise the question to its proper political plane. Thus they proved themselves of no use in this hour of need of a first class political struggle against the henchmen of Imperialism; and for liberating a band of gallant warriors at a juncture critical both for the prisoners and for the country on the verge of a life*

and death struggle against the menace of imperialist war and the imposition of the hated federation

In the midst of those anxious days, even though the prisoners were being removed daily to hospital, in precarious condition, the infamous Bengal Ministry through its spokesman, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, maintained its callous and adamant attitude. At the same time no appeal could make the prisoners change their minds. Rajendra Babu and Sjt Mahadeo Desai, the latter an emissary from Gandhiji, failed to persuade the prisoners to change their course because neither of them could suggest an alternative plan of action which could secure their release in the immediate future.

*It was clear that the old leadership had abandoned them*

Their hunger-strike was in the fourth week and now it seemed that a major calamity would soon overtake a number of them. The nation waited tensely.

*At this juncture the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee came to the rescue with a definite plan of action. Sjts Subhas Bose and Sarat Bose, at the instance of the B P C C, in hurried interviews with the strikers persuaded them to suspend the hunger-strike for a period of two months on the assurance that the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee had undertaken full responsibility for conducting a campaign for their release. If within two months their release was not effected the B P C C would launch direct action on a mass scale, preparations to that effect having already got under way.*

On this assurance the 89 valiant prisoners broke their fast on the 3rd of August.

But this by no means ends the matter, the real fight is still ahead. With the record of the reactionary Huq Ministry before us there can be no easy outcome. Sjt Subhas Bose has appealed for 10,000 volunteers and 10,000 rupees for the coming fight. Every organisation in Bengal, Congress, Kisan, Mazdoor, Student and Cultural must supply its maximum quota. The agitation, too, in the intervening period must be one of ceaseless explaining to the masses and mobilising the widest support.

Only by dint of organised mass pressure will this last batch of heroic fighters of freedom be set free. The people are pledged to secure their release here and now. The hunger-strike has shown a

splendid example of the courage of our nation. The millions outside are now morally bound not to rest till they are free.

Nor can or must the campaign be confined to Bengal. All political prisoners must be set free in every part of the country.

The most alarming factor which directly retards the struggle for civil liberties in the non-Congress Provinces is the growing attack on the Kisan and Labour movement in the Congress Provinces—the U P Government Circular, the arrest of the entire leadership of the Girm Kamgar Union (Communist) in Bombay and the cruel treatment of the Kisan Satyagrahis in Behar.

The days of National struggle ahead demand the restoration to us of our comrades incarcerated in the Punjab, in Behar, in Bombay. The release of these prisoners is a part of the general question of civil liberties guaranteed to the people in the Congress Election Manifesto *a sine qua non* of the progress of the struggle for freedom. The Bengal Congress must get the unqualified support of the Working Committee and of the Congress Ministries. In the words of the recent Calcutta resolution of the A I C C 'to make the release of these prisoners a vital issue and direct the Congress Committees to begin a vigorous agitation for the immediate and unconditional release of the political prisoners'.

Finally, let the working Committee as the supreme executive of the Congress take up the suggestion of the Political Prisoners Release Sub-Committee of the B P C C and help convene and all-India Political Prisoners Release Conference as a step in launching a nation-wide campaign.

Comrades! Send your maximum of volunteers to Bengal, contribute every pie that you can. For this once the Bengal Ministry and its foreign friends must know that our comrades must be immediately and unconditionally set free. This is the immediate task before all Communists, Socialists, Trade Unionists, Kisan Sabhantes and Students.

ALL SUPPORT TO THE B P C C ' FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS' FOR MASS ACTION '

## WHAT LED TO THE WAR

Rajani Palme Dutt

**This is the Second imperialist war.** The first imperialist war of 1914 was the war between the then leading rivals of world imperialism, between the British and German Imperialism for the re-division of the world. The war of 1914 gave rise to the beginning of the world Socialist revolution, with the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia, the initial victory of the revolution in Germany and central Europe and the spread of a revolutionary wave through the world.

### The Basic Cause

From this point the world situation has been transformed. The central issue of world socialism, and world capitalism dominates all other issues. The imperialist conflicts, which continue to develop in sharpened forms out of the consequences of the war of 1914 henceforth orientate themselves and develop in relation to this central antagonism. This is the decisive factor which made possible the rapid revival and renewed military threat of the crushed and defeated German imperialism of 1918. In the normal course the next stage of imperialist antagonism, after the crushing of German imperialism, would have passed to the Anglo-American antagonism representing the two major giants of imperialism, and indeed this began to flare up rapidly in the first phase 1918-20. But this deep underlying antagonism remained beneath the surface, slowly maturing, it was overlaid by the immediate sharper central antagonism of capitalism and socialism, by the fear of the socialist revolution, and the repercussions of this situation, in Europe. Instead, the defeated German imperialism which it had been intended by Versailles to hold crushed and bound and unable to rise anew, was able in a short space to climb back to power on the basis of this central capitalist-socialist or Anglo-Soviet antagonism. This tactical process underlaid the successive stages of Rapallo, of Stresemann's manoeuvres, of Hitler's coming to power as the champion of the West against Bolshevism, and of the ease with which Hitler was

permitted to re-arm, to receive financial assistance, to tear the bonds of Versailles as if they were made of paper, and to terrorise Europe *British imperialism, which from 1904 to 1918 spent all its resources to DELIVER THE KNOCK OUT BLOW TO GERMAN IMPERIALISM FROM 1923 TO 1938 SPENT ALL HIS RESOURCES TO REBUIID AND RESTORE GERMAN IMPERIALISM ON AN EVEN MORE POWERFUL BASIS THAN BEFORE AS THE SUPPOSED WEAPON AGAINST BOLSHIEVISM THEREBY IT FORGED THE WEAPON WHICH HAS BEEN TURNED AGAINST ITSELF THIS IS THE BASIC CAUSE OF THE WAR*

### **Predatory Treaty of Versailles**

The Allied Powers at Versailles pursued contradictory aims. On the one hand, they sought to strike down decisively once and for all German imperialism, alike in the economic, in the political and in the military field. Recognising that the weight of numbers of the German people in the centre of Europe, equal to the united populations of Britain and France, and combined with the highest technical industrial development of any European people, must inevitably, under the conditions of imperialism, lead to German domination of Europe, unless violently restrained, they sought by a Punic peace to hold the German nation forcibly divided, lopping off whole sections of the German people and handing them out to satellite States, to shatter German commercial and industrial development by the seizure of shipping and colonies and the load of reparations and to destroy German naval and military power by enforced disarmament. They understood very well that they were thereby sowing the seeds for a future war of revenge just as the Germans themselves had done by their Treaty of Frankfurt in 1871. But they calculated that they held such overwhelming power, and had imposed such stringent provision of disarmament and control, that Germany could not begin to attempt to rearm and build its power anew without being struck down again before it had reached the earliest stage. All they had failed to calculate was how rapidly dialectics can crumple up and turn inside out the most unbreakable iron bonds. Foremost among the rank and file of British Conservatism, among the 200 M. P.'s who stormed and blustered for a super-Carthagianian peace against Germany in the blindness of imperialist greed, and thus laid the seeds for Hitler's coming to power and for the present war, was on Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

## Other side of the Picture

But then came the other side of the picture *THE ALLIED POWERS AT VERSAILLES WERE EVEN MORE AFRAID OF BOLSHEVISM OR A GENUINE POPULAR REVOLUTION IN GERMANY THAN THEY HATED GERMAN MILITARISM AND IMPERIALISM*. Between these two conflicting aims they signed their own death-warrant. Only a genuine popular revolution in Germany, which destroys the military and bureaucratic caste, which strikes down the power and possessions of the Junker large landowners and of the big industrialists, and thus establishes the basis for real democracy in place the sham democracy of Weimar, can end the menace of German militarism and imperialism for the peoples of Europe. This the German people sought to accomplish in 1918-23. This the Allies would not allow them to accomplish. Under the fig-leaf of German Social Democracy, which acted as the docile agent of the allies, the German Spartacist revolution was crushed in blood, the Marxist leaders of the workers were murdered, the Soldiers, and Worker's Councils were dissolved and in order to accomplish this, the old military caste was re-established in power and armed anew. With the benevolent connivance of the Allies, Military was re-established in Germany in order to fight Bolshevism. The inter-Allied Military Missions for the control of disarmament had before them sheaves of reports and documents on the illegal re-arming and the irregular military formations which were allowed to be formed to combat the workers, but the high authorities turned a blind eye to these reports. The Orgesch, the Black Reichswehr, the Organisation Consul, the Ehrhardt Brigade and like formed the nucleus of the future fascist corps. All these were built up with the connivance of the British and French ruling class. The Weimar Republic was a facade behind which the old regime held power, until the work of counter-revolution was completed, the facade could be thrown aside and the open terrorist dictatorship proclaimed of the most reactionary and chauvinist sections of finance-capital.

## From Versailles to Munich

In this way the British and French ruling class threw away in a few years the outcome of all the sacrifices they had exacted during 1914-18 from their peoples, who had fought, as they believed, to free the world from the menace of German militarism. On the one side, they sowed the seeds of future war through the Treaty of



Versailles by establishing the oppression of the German people. On the other side, by strangling the German popular revolution and encouraging the re-establishment of the military caste, they created the force which could utilise the national grievances in order to rebuild the fighting power of German imperialism with a basis of support in the people. The national oppression *alone* could not have produced the power to threaten the overwhelming military superiority of Britain and France. The discredited military and reactionary forces *alone* could never have found a basis of support, in the people without the genuine national grievance to play on. But the combination of the two produced the explosive compound—NAZI-ISM. From this moment the short-sighted cupidity and brutality of the British and French reactionaries turned to suicidal frenzy. With their own hands they tore down the bonds of Versailles. Arms, finance, territories—all that had they poured into the lap of the Nazis as the heart's ideal of the noble warriors of civilisation against Bolshevism. "They will cheat you yet, those Junkers," the Daily Mail had brawled with monotonous insistency in the days of the Versailles madness. The prediction was correct, but it was Daily Mail that was "cheated." That lauded Hitler to high heaven tore down Versailles and handed all to the Nazi-Junker alliance. Hitler is the direct and visible incendiary of the present war. But Hitler is the product of Britain and French imperialism. *IF HITLER UPLIFTED THE MARCH TO THE GUNPOWDER IT WAS THE BRITISH AND FRENCH RULING CLASS THAT LAID THE TRAIL OF THE GUNPOWDER AND PLACED THE MARCH IN HIS HAND.* And once again, the embodiment of both stages, of the Versailles stage and of the Munich stage, the personification of a decrepit ruling oligarchy caught and torn of the spikes of its own impotent lusts, appears the figure of Neville Chamberlain the architect of the misfortunes of the British people.

### How The War Developed

The second imperialist war did not begin in September, 1939. It already began years earlier. Its preparation may be traced over the past eight years. Character was described in the History of the C. P. S. U. in 1938.

A second imperialist war has actually begun. It began stealthily without any declaration of war. States and nations have almost imperceptibly slipped into the orbit of a second imperialist war. It was the three aggressor States, the fascist ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan, that began the war in various parts of the world. In

the final analysis it is being waged against the capitalist interests of Great Britain, France and the U. S. A., since its object is a re-division of the world and of the spheres of influence in favour of the aggressor countries and at the expense of the so-called democratic states.

A distinguishing feature of the second imperialist war is that so far it is being waged and extended by the aggressor powers, while the other powers, the "Democratic" powers, against whom in fact the war is directed, pretend that it does not concern them, wash their hands off it, boast of their love of peace, scold the fascist aggressors, and....surrender their positions to the aggressors bit by bit, at the same time asserting that they are preparing to resist. Similarly we have the description of Stalin in his speech in March, 1939 :

It is a distinguishing feature of the new imperialist war that it has not yet become universal, a world war, the war is being waged by aggressor States, who in every way infringe the interests of the non-aggressive States, primarily England, France and the U.S.A., while the latter draw back and retreat, making concession after concession to the aggressors.

The new fact since September 1939 is that, following the German aggression on Poland on September 1, Britain and France, after previously refusing a general peace front which could have checked the aggression, have declared war on Germany.

### **Warnings Ignored**

What is the significance of this new step? Where does it lead, and what must be the conclusions for action to be drawn by the working class and the anti-fascist forces? We are dealing here with a situation which is not simple but complex, which is characterised by many contradictory elements, and in which it is evident that the forces have got out of control of the actors and that many sharp turns and changes may be expected. Up to the last stages British and French reaction undoubtedly counted on reaching a settlement with Germany. Poland and the Polish Treaty were originally a pawn in the game; that there was no serious consideration of the problem of military resistance at the time the Treaty was drawn up by the British Government and by Colonel Beck was shown by the placid rejection of the only help which could have saved Poland, Soviet military help, and by the complete absence of any plan of combined action and the terrible outcome when it came to practice. The warnings of Lloyd George and of Churchill at the time were explicit :

If we are going in (to help Poland) without the help of Russia, we are walking into a trap. I ask the Government to take immediate steps to secure the adhesion of Russia: an alliance, an agreement, a pact - it does not matter what it is called, so long as it is an understanding to stand together against the aggressor. Apart from that we have undertaken a frightful gamble, a very risky gamble. (Lloyd George in the House of Commons, April 3, 1939)

He (Chamberlain) guaranteed Poland, Russia and Greece against the huge army of Germany. I was the first to call attention to that obvious fact in the House of Commons. I denounced it as sheer madness to give such a pledge in the absence of military support from Russia. Russian troops alone could reach the battlefield in time to save the Polish Army from being crushed. (Lloyd George in the Sunday Express, July 27, 1939)

"There is no means of maintaining an Eastern Front against Nazi aggression without the active aid of Russia" (Churchill in the Daily Telegraph, May 4, 1939). These warnings of the Spring of 1939, which became terrible reality in the Autumn, were not a secret, they were spoken from the housetops. The fact that these warnings were ignored is evidence that there was no serious expectation of a conflict, the guarantees were a form of diplomatic pressure on Germany, the certainty of a deal with Germany, including a German-Polish settlement, was assumed. Hence also the placid acceptance of the Nazi military occupation of Danzig and the pressure on Poland to make no opposition: it became evident, when the British Military Mission reached Moscow, that the problem of military resistance was not being considered as a practice.

Who were considering it as serious strategic problem, and the British authorities practical problem, and that between the Soviet authorities there was no common ground. The financial oligarchies were only playing as they thought with diplomatic pawns. But the diplomatic pawns were live nations.

### **Big and Dangerous Game**

The same situation and calculations--or miscalculations--were clearly shown in the character of the negotiations with the Soviet Union. There was neither any conception of urgency nor any serious intention to reach a Peace Front. Had there been either, the offer of the Soviet Union for a firm and binding reciprocal Peace Pact would have been immediately closed with, as it was made, instead of being first ignored, then repudiated on principle.

(Chamberlain in April), and then played with through every device ingenuity could invent for delay. It is evident that the intention here also was to use the negotiations as a diplomatic bluff, in order to exercise pressure on Germany to reach an agreement by the threat of possible alternative. Meanwhile the serious approaches and negotiations with Germany went forward (Hudson-Wohltat, Kemsley-Hitler, etc) until the situation was considered ripe for the conception of the Five power Conference, excluding the Soviet Union, to be publicly launched in the British press. During all this period the Nazi military preparations went openly forward. It was known that mid-August would see the completion of the Nazi mobilisation. Yet this knowledge produced no sense of urgency in British ruling circles for the necessity of building an immediate front to meet the menace of aggression. On the contrary, as late as August 3, the British Minister of Defence placidly declared that "War is unlikely—and the Government has very good reasons for saying that". They were very confident of their plan for the second Munich. They were very confident that the Nazi mobilisation would be directed elsewhere. They were very confident that they had the poor Soviet simpletons on a string. Unfortunately for themselves they did not realise that they were not dealing with Blums and Attlees, but with men who understood every move of the "big and dangerous game the Munichites were playing" and the "serious fiasco" to which it would lead.

### **Chamberlain's Plans Smashed**

With massive patience, the Soviet Union waited till the very extreme edge of risk and danger, till the second half of August, not because they failed to understand the manoeuvres of Chamberlain (the successive warnings of Molotov and Zhdanov were sharp and open) but to give the utmost chance to the forces in Britain which wished for the Pact to awaken from their daydreams to the real menace and to compel the conclusion of the Peace Front which could alone save peace. But the official opposition forces in Britain remained fatuously complacent and passive, noisily proclaiming every few days that the Peace Pact was just about to be reached (which was exactly what Chamberlain wanted them to do), trusting Chamberlain, refusing to lift a finger against Chamberlain, refusing to unite, elaborately discussing the terms of a deal with Hitler "after" the Peace Front instead of fighting for the Peace Front. When the British Military Mission to Moscow at the very moment

of Hitler's full mobilisation, made clear that they had not the slightest intention of even discussing any common action, the Soviet Union drew the necessary conclusions and took immediate steps to meet the situation. It was no longer possible to save general peace by a Peace Front, when the Peace Front was refused by the Governments of the West, the Western peoples proved incapable of checking the sabotage of their Governments. It was not possible to save the doomed and passive peoples of the West against their will. It was necessary to find an alternative path to break the counter-revolutionary front. On August 23 the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany. The reactionary plans of Chamberlain were smashed with a single blow.

### **The Blood Guilt**

From this point the fiasco of Chamberlain was manifest to the word. The refusal of the Peace Front recoiled on the heads of the non-interventionists. From the moment that Hitler was clear that Chamberlain had finally refused the Peace Front, he knew that he could strike his blow. The Munichites, the British reactionaries who refused the Peace Front and let loose catastrophe upon the world, now try to hide their guilt and to claim that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact let loose Hitler's attack. This is like claiming that because the thunder follows the lightning, the flash is the cause of the thunder. Hitler's mobilisation was reaching its height already by Mid-August. The blow was visibly preparing. Only the immediate conclusion of the Peace Front could have checked it. The Soviet military authorities put forward the most urgent and concrete proposals for action to check it. These proposals were refused. From the moment of that refusal the fate of Western and Central Europe was sealed. *The refusal of the Peace Front by Chamberlain led equally to the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, and to Hitler's attack. The two consequences followed from a single cause.* The blood-guilt cannot be escaped. The responsibility for this war lies not only with Hitler, the direct aggressor and launcher of the war, but with British and French reaction who could have checked the aggression without war and who refused, thereby choosing the path of war.

### **Chamberlain's War AIMS**

Now that the war is here, under the conditions of Chamberlain's choosing, not of our choosing, what course must the British and

French peoples, what course must the working class fighters against fascism, pursue? Though it is a war against Hitler, the spearhead of international reaction and the deadly enemy of the international labour movement, *the fact must be faced that it is an imperialist war. This war is not the war of the Peace Front against fascist aggression*, for the Peace Front was never realised, the realisation of the Peace Front would have meant not war but peace. The British and French reactionaries are not fighting for democracy against fascism, or they would have stood by Spain and Czechoslovakia. They are not fighting for freedom of small nations or for the sanctity of treaties, or for the maintenance of peace against aggression. They have trampled all these principles under foot and shown in a practice that they have no care for them. They are fighting for their own imperialist interests and for nothing else. They are fighting because the further advance of Hitler-fascism to the domination of Europe, to the south-east and to the Middle Eastern Empire, and to the demand for colonies, threatens the vital interests of British imperialism. They are fighting for the maintenance of the British Empire against a vital imperialism. And even after they have formally declared war, they still seek for a way out, for a basis of settlement that could divert the imperialist war, whose deadly menace to their whole system they well understand, into the channels of counter-revolutionary war. They use the slogans of anti-fascism for their own dirty aims. They will pursue the war for their imperialist aims to reach an imperialist peace. On all these harsh realities, there is no room for illusions.

### The Historic Signal

The problems before the working class movement are sharp and urgent. But the dilemmas of the imperialists are a hundred times greater. They can neither find their solution in peace nor in war. The Soviet Union grows immeasurably stronger. The basis of the fascist dictatorships is being undermined. Explosive situations develop in all the belligerent countries. The colonial peoples stir against their bonds and see before them new possibilities of advancing their struggle for liberation. THE SECOND IMPERIALIST WAR IS THE HISTORICAL SIGNAL FOR MASS AWAKENING IN THE COUNTRIES OF EUROPE AND IN ALL THE COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND FOR NEW ADVANCE TO THE GOAL OF WORLD SOCIALISM.

## NATION'S VANGUARD IN ACTION 100,000 TO THE FORE !

S. S. Batliwala

### **The Background**

From the day the second imperialist World war began, we were all very concerned. Not to say that the machinations of Chamberlain and his gang had enmeshed us in their glib talk about "defence of democracy". What worried the Communists, leaders and rank and file, was how to effectively harness the opportunity, and create confidence in the Indian National Congress that the working class would not fall behind in the fight against imperialism and for independence.

It was increasingly evident that the top leadership in the Congress was hesitant and wavering. It was adopting dilatory tactics, and going in for negotiations with the Viceroy.

The country was seething with discontent. The Defence of India Ordinance was demoralising quite a lot of political workers in the Congress fold through its ruthless provisions. "It is no more a question of going to jail as in the C. D. days, this time you face the gallows! Let us not be rash, let us move with circumspection"—this was the advice freely given by responsible "leaders".

The Communists were faced with the task of breaking the spell of the Ordinance, and creating confidence in the masses. We, in Bombay, determined to give the lead, and naturally our first task was to organise a one-day political strike with the dominant section of the local working-class, the textile workers, shouldering the burden.

### **The Handicaps**

We were faced with tremendous obstacles.

The local nationalist newspapers were crowing the imperialist tune under the direct gaze of the Press Censor. They refused to give us even a few odd lines in a remote corner of their journals for the purpose of giving the call. Legal leaflets and handbills could

not be issued, as the owners of printing presses refused to risk "confiscation" by publishing our manifesto or appeal. Even the "Kranti", our Marathi weekly, and the "National Front" had been forced to close down because no press was prepared to print "Communist" newspapers.

The police made bando-bast to prevent processions by enforcing the requisite of a "pass" to be previously obtained from the local police station.

Our most popular comrades on the textile front, the office bearers of the Girni Kamgar Union, were bound down by "bail-conditions". They were prohibited from addressing meetings, or otherwise taking part, directly or indirectly, in the furtherance of any strike. Thus, Comrades Dange, Mirajkar, Mrs. Dange, Patkar, Bhise and Bhogle were not available to us.

The C. S. P. was not ready to co-operate.

The Trade Unions would have to be left out of count in order not to deprive the workers of their legal organisations in these days of economic hardship entailed by the War.

Besides all this, the issue would be a straight political one, not permitting the use of economic grievances for rallying support. A clear anti-war call would be given, the Ordinance would be defied in action and not in mere words, and we were to be ready for the full consequences of the action.

### **The Preparations**

A meeting of all Communists unanimously decided for the strike to be called on 2nd October. The die was cast.

Our campaign immediately started with barely three weeks in hand. With hurricane speed meetings of contacts were convened, areas divided up, and details chalked out. From the first day, the streetcorner meetings were organised. All our speakers, good, bad and indifferent were posted in different localities. Under the Red-Flag gathered toiling men and women to listen to the clear analysis of the war, the repudiation of any and every compromise, the exposure of "neutrality", the reasons why the working class was forced to take the lead and point the way to the rest of the nation, a call to immediate action.

From all corners came the demand for handbills and leaflets. With great difficulty the Manifesto was printed anyhow and



circulated. The Congress Ministry had distributed thirteen lacs handbills, and the B.P.T.U. C. had printed 1 lac 20 thousand before the general strike on 7th November. Only ten thousand copies of the Manifesto could be printed for the strike on 2nd October. Further handbills were not possible to get.

Everyday, after the mills closed, the working class area hummed with activity. Cyclists with red-flags went shouting by. In the night men with burning torches appeared at strategic corners and harangued the crowd. A new cadre which had not touched the textile workers before, took street-corner and chawl meetings, and gave convincing proof of the ramifications of Communists in the city. They argued and carried conviction, patiently explaining the difficulties that loomed large before the workers. In the morning as the workers went to their mills and factories, they were greeted by handwritten posters in their chawls, on the walls of buildings, on the stairs they mounted, at the gates they entered, even on the road on which they walked. Group meetings of "contacts", the gatherings of promising workers selected for their mettle in previous local strike struggles, were organised by the hundred. Everywhere the effort was to clearly understand the political implications of the strike. These contacts emerging from these "study circles" widened the net of organisation, and proved to be the pivot of the strike. They brought home the lesson that effective Trade Union work is indispensable for a party professing Marxism, because that alone can supply the necessary links with the working masses and permit you to test and choose the right men. The patient work of our comrades for the last so many years in the Girni Kamgar Union was yielding the result.

Four days previous to the strike the first blow was received. Com. Sawant was arrested with a bundle of anti-war posters and taken to the lock-up. The comrades resolved, "We shall be more careful. We cannot afford to lose comrades like this". The campaign was further intensified on the last days but no arrest of a similar kind could be effected by the police.

### **Rally on Sunday**

The rally of workers at Delisle Road mustered only ten thousand men and a sprinkling of women workers.

“This means that the strike to-morrow will be a flop” said an interested press reporter in the hearing of our comrades.

“I beg your pardon”, came the prompt reply. “What you do not see is the character of the gathering. We are working on a different basis this time. We are not relying on agitation and mass enthusiasm so much as on effective organisation. Here in this meeting there are representatives from every centre and area. The picked men, the contacts are here. And we are confident about success to-morrow.”

But the press representative went away unconvinced. He had witnessed the rally that preceded the 7th November general strike. It had reached the colossal figure of nearly a lac. This rally could not impress him.

Com. Joglekar presided at the rally. In his characteristic style, he brought the grimness of the occasion to bear on the workers Com. Parulekar, Joint Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress and a member of the Servants of India Society, spoke next. In burning words, he tore the veil that covers the propaganda by the Government “Why should you offer your lives at the altar of this British Empire? This is a war between two dacoits. Let them fight between themselves. Why should we, the toilers, their victims, help them?” Comrade Ranadive made the best speech of the day. In quiet argumentative style, he posed one problem after another and demolished the bogey held up before the workers against the strike on the 2nd October.

We are told we shall lose a week's wages by going on a day's strike. But who can deny that if we do not strike on this political issue, if we do not give the call for action so that national independence may be achieved, we shall lose not a week's wages but the wages of a whole life-time, the wages of freedom from slavery, the wages of happiness from misery, the wages of relief from stark exploitation that is our misfortune to-day, and harder chains to-morrow?..... We are not stealing the initiative from anybody. Through the strike, we assure the Congress, the Indian nation, that the working class will be solidly behind every struggle for attaining freedom, whatever the cost, however big the sacrifice demanded. .... We give our assurance by deeds and not only by words..... To-day the British lion has fallen into a pit which he dug himself. He had meant it for Soviet Russia, the land where

Workers and Peasants rule. It is not our good fortune to claim that we have pushed him into the pit. But it is certainly our good fortune that he is in it. We are not going to help him to come out. The lion is telling us : 'Pull me out by my tail, dear lamb, and we shall be eternal friends.' But we know full well that the lion will eat us up if he is once extricated. So all we are ready to do is to push him deeper down, to cover the pit, along with him, with dust and sand, and give this vicious exploiting Empire a decent burial....."

There was loud and long applause. "Victory to the Red Flag", "Down with Imperialist War", "Long live Indian Independence" burst forth from every corner.

The meeting transformed itself into a procession, headed by the women with torch-lights. Till late in the night, these men and women marched through streets and by-lanes carrying the message for the next day.

All night there was feverish activity. The finishing touches to the arrangements were completed by 2 a.m. And by 4 a.m., the pickets with Red Flags had already reached every mill-gate. Over and above these, there were pickets posted at strategic corners and chawl-gates. Then with baited breath we waited. I turned to Com. Bukhari and asked : "What is your estimate of success?" A mysterious jumble of lines gathered on his forehead and with the left eye half-closed, he haltingly said : "Success—I am certain about. But numbers—I fear it may not reach even 50 per cent of 7th November. You see, the odds are too great."

I asked Com. Vaidya the same question. He said : "The Bombay working class has never failed us. But I agree the odds are very great. No press, no handbills, no effective opposition to give momentum, no effective aid from others. They are trying to kill us by isolation, by putting us in cold-storage..... Yes, Yes. I believe we can draw easily about thirty thousands or so—because the issue is a straight politically prepared strike and the terror of the Defence of India Act are prevalent in the city."

I asked a young worker lad : "What are the workers feeling? Will there be a strike?" He was visibly annoyed. "Have you doubts about it? Come to my chawl and speak to the workers themselves. The worker is quite confident about the strike. We have done it before, we shall do it again." And then the momentous day arrived. All our sober calculations were smashed up by the militant working

class. The Bombay textile proletariat rose to the occasion and gave a bigger and a better demonstration than 7th November.

### **The Red Letter Day**

We had only one motor-lorry to give the call on the day of the strike. The loud-speaker was not available. Nor were Coms. Dange or Mirajkar available.

Police arrangements were thorough. In front of every mill-gate, at every street-corner, the Police with their lathis strutted about under the direct supervision of a sergeant or a sub-inspector. In three or four places, armed policemen with rifles were present in batches of twelve and more. Four loaded police vans continuously patrolled the labour areas, going round and round, stopping before each mill-gate, exchanging greetings and going ahead.

But where were the workers?

The slogan given was : “ You need not stir out of your houses Do not throng near mill-gates, or the Police may take the excuse for a lathicharge or more.” And the order was being obeyed. The streets remained empty, especially in front of mill-gates.

*“Bombay workers are organising a protest strike on 2nd October against war and in order to declare that India can help the world democracy and the cause of peace only by establishing democracy and freedom for herself. This policy is in line with the declared policy of the Congress.*

*I greet the action of the Bombay working class as giving a lead to other classes for action in this hour of crisis.*

*I take the strike as proof that our people are prepared to back up the Congress Working Committee in any call for struggle.*

*The workers are striking for a day, let the entire nation simultaneously declare for freedom and against imperialism*

—SUBHAS BOSE.

Picketing was hardly needed.

At the Morarjee Mills I got mixed up with some Bhaiya workers. One of them was saying : “Bhaiya, this time we must not be disgraced like last time, We are not going in at all—nowhere near the gates. They blamed us as strike-breakers. Don’t you remember the rebuke of Swamiji when he came here the other day?” And the others—to a man— concurred.

In Madanpura, the Muslim workers seemed equally determined.

“This is our strike too. The Britisher is no friend of Islam. And we know the Red Flag stands equally for everybody.”

I asked : “What is the position in your area?”

The prompt reply came : “More than fifty per cent of Muslim workers have obeyed the Red Flag consciously. At Worli, a dozen women workers were arguing strenuously. I overheard : “Who is going to stop me? Come, I shall lead you in ”

“No, No, you are foolish—What will you gain by going in?”

“Are you going to lose wages for these good-for-nothing?”

“Don't say that—I am not coming. I am a follower of these Red Flaggers. Have you never heard Usha-tai speaking at a meeting?”

In the end all went home. They said the children at home were better company than the inhuman machines.

### **Police Truculence**

We almost ran into two volunteers with Red Flags being pursued by a dozen lathi-wielding policemen under the valiant lead of an Anglo-Indian Sergeant at Foras Road

The volunteers complained that they had been assaulted, the flag torn, and now they were being bodily hustled away from the area

We asked the sergeant why he was behaving in this fashion. “I don't want anybody lurking about here. They tried to hold a meeting in the garden next door to the Mill. Supposing they throw stones from there. I shall not permit it ”

We had to sternly tell him that he was over-stepping the bounds of his duties that he could not stop meetings like this in anticipation of stone-throwing.

“I do not care. I am the master here.” And he started strutting about the place, brandishing his “stick.”

A crowd had collected. We decided to report him to higher authorities. We got our volunteers to resume their meeting as well as picket-posts with the flags. As we were moving away to the Police Station, the sergeant walked up. “Look here, mister. I did not mean any harm. The flag was accidentally torn. Honest truth. Let us treat the whole incident as closed.”

And when we told him that his explanation was unsatisfactory, he said : “But I am an Indian, I was born in India, I wish to live in India. We are all brothers.”

This was something new from an Anglo-Indian sergeant.

But the police tried to keep a neutral attitude in most cases. They did not take sides as on 7th November

### Some Incidents

At Worli, the manager and higher staff of a mill came out and started using undue pressure on their men to get in, actually hustling some of them inside. The volunteer at the gate gave an extempore speech. In order to silence him a stone was pelted at him from inside the mill gate. It caught him in the back. The result was at once visible. Even the dozen or so who had weakened and were about to be dragged in, walked away disgusted with the mill authorities. The manager made a piteous appeal saying he was a "labour-wallah", but to no avail. In half an hour, the fifty who had previously gone in also came out and joined the strike. The mill completely closed down for the day by 9 a. m.

At Kohinoor Mills men were brought into the Mills, from 3 a. m. Nearly a thousand and five-hundred—nearly half the complement—was in by 8 a. m. But by 11-30 a. m. the whole mill came out *en masse* and joined the strike.

Nearly 40 mills remained completely closed from the beginning, not a single worker crossing the gate.

Another 15 tried to work with depleted complements, but most of them had to give up the ghost by 12 noon.

In the north of Bombay, where the labour areas are situated, all the colleges and the most important schools also closed down. Nearly ten thousand students came on the streets. Three meetings of students took place and fiery speeches against War, and declaring solidarity with the workers, were made. It is interesting to note in this connection that these students attended the evening Kamgar Maidan meeting, and the workers greeted them with "Vidyarthi-Kamgaranchi Jai."

At Girgaon, a group of hotel workers went from restaurant to restaurant with two demands : (1) one hotel-worker to join the group in propaganda; (2) the restaurant to shut down in sympathy with the strike.

The Dharavi leather workers had joined the strike. So also a majority of the Ambarnath match factory workers. The seamen held

a demonstration and meeting in sympathy. Sections of building workers laid down their tools.

Com. Taher was first arrested for "obstruction to traffic" and released. Once again he was arrested for "stone-throwing" and bailed out for Rs. 10.

Two volunteers were also arrested for "obstruction" and bailed out for varying amounts.

But the whole day passed without a single affray or 'incident'. The workers behaved with great restraint, and earned the unstinted unanimous compliment even from the hostile local press that the strike was absolutely peaceful and no force was used at any stage.

By 9 a.m. the strike was practically complete. I totalled 89,000 workers when we approached the desk of Coms. Deshpande and Bhandarkar at the "Kranti" office for reports from the various centres. The comrades had worked with iron discipline. The organisation functioned through the new contacts and had worked wonderfully. The Phoenix Mills workers, men and women, on strike for the last six months, had done yeoman service. After the success of 7th November interested parties had maintained that the success of the general strike was due to the unholy alliance made by the Communists with Ambedkar. Ambedkar and his party have now declared for co-operation with Britain. And yet the call of the Communists had found a bigger response from workers than 7th November, and in a sober and quieter mood. The strike had made a record in numbers and in the peaceful way in which it was accomplished.

### **"Arm in Arm, We March to Victory"**

As we went along to the historic Kamgar Maidan, Com. Ranadive remarked: "For the next strike, we need only one public rally, one meeting of contacts and one handbill, and the task would be accomplished." Nobody contradicted him and so well was everybody impressed by the cool, silent and yet effective strength displayed by the workers. There was no fuss, no excitement, but with quiet, determined, grim faces they had forged a huge political weapon for themselves and evolved the technique of its use.

We reached the Kamgar Maidan and a sea of heads greeted us.

The maidan was decked in huge Red Flags. Com. Shahid, with his stentorian voice and wide swceping gestures, was casting a spell on the audience.

“Lal Jhanda hai hamare hathmain!

.....

Jante hain ek lashkar ayaga,  
Top dikhla ker hamain dhamkayaga.  
Per yahi janda bhi yuhin lahrayaga!

.....

Such hain ke hum bhukse bejan hain.  
Iss buri halat main bhi toofan hain.  
Lal Jhanda hai hamare hathmain!”

Com. Guran retailed in song, in a beautifully worded Marathi *povada*, the history of the Russian Worker before, during and after the Revolution. Every phrase was eagerly taken in, and as he stretched the pitch of the last words, thundering applause greeted him. Com. Tambitkar sang :

“Uthav jhanda eki cha,  
Jhanda amcha rakta cha,  
Kamkari swatantriyacha!

.....

.....

Ladha Challa potacha,  
Pastis-koti janatecha,  
Uthav Jhanda eki cha!”

and the huge multitude, transformed into a militant mood, sang with him, rocking to the tune.

Com. Joglekar once again presided at the meeting and gave a stirring call to action. “We, the workers of Bombay, have proved to-day that we shall never be found wanting in the struggle for independence..... English statesmen shall no more fix who is our friend.....This Hitler whom they called a friend yesterday is now the worst criminal on earth.....We have nothing to do with their quarrels. We stand for a free India and are determined to achieve our independence.”

Com. Ranadive moved the main resolution of the day. In a speech which went directly to the heart of the workers he explained how the war had come about, who was involved in it and why.



He said : "If Gandhiji stands pledged to non-violence, it is understandable why he wants India to support Britain which has resorted to violence....We had a peaceful exhibition of our strength to-day, and we pledge that till the last worker is alive, we shall fight for the cause so dear to the Indian nation." He gave the history of the workers struggle in Bombay and India, and asked, "With what face can imperialists and foreign capitalists ask us to-day to help them? Have they forgotten their own misdeeds? And what is the guarantee that the shootings on workers, the Jallian wallas, will not be repeated in the future? We are not likely to give milk to the serpent who has bitten us before and whose teeth have not been drawn by us.....If the Russian worker could effect a revolution during the last World War, the Indian worker can also rise to the same heights now

He ended up amidst cheers when he declared : "They say the war will last for three years. We have sworn to day to resist imperialism, and within the three years, we are sure of bringing it down to dust."

The resolution was read out :—

"This meeting declares its solidarity with the international working class and the peoples of the world, who are being dragged into the most destructive war, by the Imperialist Powers. The meeting regards the present war as a challenge to the international solidarity of the working-class, and declares that it is the common task of the workers and people of different countries to defeat this imperialist conspiracy against humanity, so that peace and goodwill is restored among the nations of the world."

This meeting condemns the Nazi aggression against Poland, and expresses its deep sympathy with the Polish people, who have been the victims of barbarous atrocities.

This meeting is further of opinion that the war between Nazi Germany and British Imperialism is born out of Imperialist rivalry, and that British Imperialism in neither defending democracy nor the Independence of nations.

This meeting, therefore, is of opinion that loyalty to Indian freedom demands resistance to war on the part of the Indian people.

This meeting strongly protests against the attempts of the

Government to exploit Indian resources and man-power and impose the war on India in spite of India's declared opposition to it.

This meeting strongly condemns the Viceregal Ordinances which virtually place the country under martial law regime and demands their immediate repeal.

This meeting is of opinion that the full resources of the country should be utilised at this critical stage for forcing the pace of Indian democracy. This meeting, therefore, requests the coming meeting of the A.I.C.C. to give a bold lead to the country, by throwing overboard all compromise proposals and starting a nation-wide war-resistance movement.

This meeting pledges itself to war resistance and declares that any other path at this critical juncture would be a crime against Indian freedom and independence."

Comrade Bukhari in his simple and forceful Urdu, seconded the resolution. He explained the task of the working class in the present epoch, dilated on the foreign policy of Soviet Russia, and appealed to the Congress to launch a country-wide struggle from which we must emerge victorious.

Com. Parulekar was greeted by the workers as he advanced to the microphone. He said, "To-day your success has created a stir in the Assembly Chambers. Prime Minister Kher acknowledged to me that the strike has been a phenomenal success. I greet you on your strength and unity."

Com. Indulal Yagnik, Jt. Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha then rose to give fraternal greetings on behalf of the A.I.K.S. and the Forward Bloc.

"I am returning from my tour of Gujerat and I bring you the admiration and affection of the peasants. You know how to do things in a big way. We, the poor peasants live in small isolated villages, but we too are copying your example. We have also started resistance against war.

The resolution was adopted amidst loud slogans of "Down with Imperialist War", "Long live Indian freedom."

The meeting adopted a resolution supporting the demand of workers for wage adjustment to prices.

"This meeting is firmly of opinion that the rise in prices.

permitted under Government authority is extortionate and excessive. It has entailed severe hardship on poor and middle sections of the population.

This meeting therefore demands immediate legislation guaranteeing increase in wages with the rise in prices. This meeting further calls upon the workers of Bombay to organise a conference to create sanctions behind the above demand."

The meeting then adopted a resolution demanding from the Congress Government a fair settlement to the Phoenix Mills Strike. Com. Laljee Pendse explained in detail the need of building up the Girmī Kamgar Union into a mass union and how a sound trade union can be the basis of a sound political party. Com. Gambitkar made an impassioned appeal for the redress of the grievances of the Phoenix Mills workers, related their miseries and showed how firmly they had borne the brunt of a long strike to save the Bombay working class from retrenchment and unemployment.

The Marathi version of the International was cheered to an echo and the meeting dispersed.

We were all tired out after a strenuous day. But the "Kranti" office carried on discussions for another two hours, evaluating the gains, measuring the next advance, wondering what the morrow would bring us. The fateful meeting of the Viceroy and the Congress War Cabinet has been scheduled for the 3rd October.

## COMMUNIST DRAFT RESOLUTION

### India and the War

The A I C C has carefully considered the statements of the British Premier on Britain's war aims and has taken note of the attitude adopted by the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy on the last statement of the Working Committee laying down India's position vis-a-vis the present war

The A I C C deplors that the British Government both in England and in India, notwithstanding their democratic protestations have promulgated emergency war measures which have instituted a fascist regimentation of public life suppressing freedom of press, speech and association

The British Government have promulgated Ordinances passed the Government of India Act Amendment Bill and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial governments

The Government have used the Ordinance to completely suppress all normal political activity and the press especially in the Punjab and in Bengal, to make numerous arrests of political workers and in one case to ruthlessly suppress the just economic struggle of the workers (at Digboi)

The Government have now placed on the Statute Book the Defence of India Act embodying all the provisions of the Ordinances in the face of the known disapproval of the Congress M L A s and the protest of the other elected members of the Central Assembly

The Government through its day-to-day war measures regarding

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*Comrades R D Bharadwaj, Somnath Lahiri, Bankim Mukherjee and S G Sardesai have given notice of the following resolution on India and the War for the A I C C Session to be held at Wardha on the 9th October and following days*

the appropriation of Indian resources for war ends, the transfer of Indian troops abroad etc. is committing India to a policy to which she is not a party and of which, she disapproves.

In view of these developments and in view of the attitude adopted by the British Government on the last Working Committee statement on war the Indian National Congress declares:—

That the Indian people will not participate in the present war which they are convinced is being fought by Britain to defend the Imperialist *status quo* and to consolidate Imperialism in India and elsewhere.

That while Congress abhors both fascism and imperialism and supports the fight for World Democracy it is the free Indian Nation that alone can determine what our policy in a war shall be. When freedom is achieved the Congress will place its own point of view before the free Nation but till then it cannot support the war in anyway.

That nothing can convince the Indian people that the present war is being fought for democracy as long as Ordinances and Defence of India Act and other war measures continue to strangle the normal political life and civil liberties of the Indian people, as long as her right to self-determination and complete independence is not conceded, as long as immediate steps are not taken to ensure that right through measures which ensure full popular control by the Indian people of their Army, the industrial and economic development of the country and foreign policy.

The A.I.C.C. therefore adopts the following programme of action:—

1. The Ministries must refuse to submit to the restriction imposed by the Ordinances and by the Defence of India Act, must refuse to assist in war measures and actively non-co-operate in war preparations and face dismissal

2. The campaign of mass resistance against war measures would be inaugurated by an All-India Day of Protest (strike and hartal) against Imperialist War; against Ordinance and other imposed war measures. On this day we declare our sympathy with the Polish people condemn Chamberlain's and Hitler's policy which led to war

and appeal to the British and French peoples to convert this imperialist war into a war to end both imperialism and fascism.

3. Boycott of British goods.

4. Resistance to the curtailment of the freedom of press, organisation and association, through the Ordinances and the Defence of India Act.

5. Resumption of struggle for democracy in the States.

6. Mass campaign to stop transfer of men, money and material for the imperialist war.

The A.I.C.C. authorises the Working Committee to appoint a broad Council of Action which would be fully representative of the Committee and whose task would be to take all measures to inaugurate, organise and carry through the campaign, to guide and lead the provincial committees and Councils of Action and to take all precautions ensuring the fullest unity and discipline within the organisation and enlisting the support and cooperation of Labour and Kisan organisations.

## THE BOMBAY STRIKE

S. S. Batliwala

From the day the second imperialist world war began, we were all very concerned. Not to say that the machinations of Chamberlain and his gang had enmeshed us in their glib talk about "defence of democracy." What worried the Communists, leaders and rank and file, was how to effectively harness the opportunity and create confidence in the Indian National Congress that the working class would not fall behind in the fight against imperialism and for independence.

It was increasingly evident that the top leadership in the Congress was hesitant and wavering. It was adopting dilatory tactics, and going in for negotiations with the Viceroy.

The country was seething with discontent. The Defence of India Ordinance was demoralising quite a lot of political workers in the Congress fold through its ruthless provisions. "It is no more a question of going to jail as in the Civil Disobedience days; this time you face the gallows! Let us not be rash, let us move with circumspection." —this was the advice freely given by responsible "leaders."

The Communists were faced with the task of breaking the spell of Ordinance, and creating confidence in the masses. We, in Bombay, determined to give the lead, and naturally our first task was to organise a one-day political strike with the dominant section of the local working class, the textile workers, shouldering the burden.

We were faced with tremendous obstacles.

The local nationalist newspapers were crowing the imperialist tune under the direct gaze of the Press Censor. They refused to give us even a few odd lines in a remote corner of their journals for the purpose of giving the call. Legal leaflets and handbills could not be issued, as the owners of printing presses refused to risk "confiscation" by publishing our manifesto or appeal. Even the

Kranti, our Marathi Weekly, and the National Front had been forced to close down because no press was prepared to print "Communist" newspapers.

The police made bando-bast to prevent procession by enforcing the requisite of a "pass" to be previously obtained from the local police station.

Our most popular comrades on the textile front, the office bearers of the Gimi Kamgar Union, were bound down by "bail-conditions." They were prohibited from addressing meetings, or otherwise taking part, directly or indirectly, in the furtherance of any strike. Thus, Comrades Dange, Mirajkar, Mrs Dange, Patkar, Bhise and Bhogle were not available to us.

The Congress Socialist Party was not ready to co-operate.

The Trade Unions would have to be left out of count in order not to deprive the workers of their legal organizations in these days of economic hardship entailed by the War.

Besides all this, the issue would be a straight political one, not permitting the use of economic grievances for rallying support. A clear anti-war call would be given, the Ordinance would be defied in action and not in mere words, and we were to be ready for the full consequences of the action.

A meeting of all Communists unanimously decided for the strike to be called on October 2. The die was cast.

Our campaign immediately started with barely three weeks in hand. With hurricane speed meetings of contacts were convened, areas divided up, and details chalked out. From the first day, the street-corner meetings were organised. All our speakers, good, bad and indifferent, were posted in different localities. Under the Red Flag gathered toiling men and women to listen to the clear analysis of the war, the repudiation of any and every compromise, the exposure of "neutrality," the reasons why the working class was forced to take the lead and point the way to the rest of the nation, a call to immediate action.

From all corners came the demand for handbills and leaflets. With great difficulty the Manifesto was printed anyhow and circulated. The Congress Ministry had distributed 1,300,000 handbills, and the Bombay Provincial Trades Union Congress had printed 120,000 before the general strike on November 7. Only ten



thousand copies of the Manifesto could be printed for the strike on October 2. Further handbills were not possible to get.

Every day, after the mills closed, the working-class area hummed with activity. Cyclists with red flags went shouting by. In the night men with burning torches appeared at strategic corners and harangued the crowd. A new cadre, which had not touched the textile workers before, took street-corner and chawl meetings and gave convincing proof of the ramifications of Communists in the city. They argued and carried conviction, patiently explaining the difficulties that loomed large before the workers. In the morning as the workers went to their mills and factories, they were greeted by hand-written posters in their chawls, on the walls of buildings, on the stairs they mounted, at the gates they entered, even on the road on which they walked. Group meetings of "contacts," the gatherings of promising workers selected for their mettle in previous local strike struggles were organised by the hundred. Everywhere the effort was to clearly understand the political implications of the strike. These contacts emerging from these "study circles" widened the net of organisation, and proved to be the pivot of the strike. They brought home the lesson that effective Trade Union work is indispensable for a party professing Marxism, because that alone can supply the necessary links with the working masses and permit you to test and choose the right men. The patient work of our comrades for the last so many years in the Girmi Kamgar Union was yielding its result.

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"This means that the strike to-morrow will be a flop" said an interested press reporter in the hearing of our comrades.

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are representatives from every centre and area. The picked men, the contacts, are here. And we are confident about success to-morrow."

But the press representative went away unconvinced. He had witnessed the rally that preceded the November 7, general strike. It had reached the colossal figure or nearly a lac. This rally could not impress him.

Com Joglekar presided at the rally. In his characteristic style, he brought the grimness of the occasion to bear on the workers. Com. Parulekar, Joint Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress and a member of the Servants of India Society, spoke next. In burning words, he tore the veil that covers the propaganda by the Government. "Why should you offer your lives at the altar of this British Empire ? This is a war between two dacoits. Let them fight between themselves. Why should we, the toilers, their victims, help them?" Comrade Ranadive made the best speech of the day. In quiet argumentative style, he posed one problem after another and demolished the bogey held up before the workers against the strike on October 2.

"We are told we shall lose a week's wages by going off a day's strike. But who can deny that if we do not strike on this political issue, if we do not give the call for action so that national independence may be achieved, we shall lose not a week's wages but the wages of a whole life-time the wages of freedom from slavery, the wages of happiness from misery, the wages of relief from stark exploitation that is our misfortune to-day, and harder chains to-morrow ? ..We are not stealing the initiative from anybody. Through the strike, we assure the Congress, the Indian nation, that the working class will be solidly behind every struggle for attaining freedom, whatever the cost, however big the sacrifice demanded. ..We give our assurance by deeds and not only by words ...To-day the British lion has fallen into a pit which he dug himself. He had meant it for Soviet Russia, the land where Workers and Peasants rule. It is not our good fortune to claim that we have pushed him into the pit. But it is certainly our good fortune that he is in it. We are not going to help him to come out. The lion is telling us : "Pull me out by my tail, dear lamb, and we shall be eternal friends." But we know full well that the lion will eat us up if he is once extricated. So all we are ready to do is to push him deeper down,

to cover the pit. along with him, with dust and sand, and give this vicious exploiting Empire a decent burial..."

There was loud and long applause. "Victory to the Red Flag." "Down with Imperialist War." "Long Live Indian Independence," burst forth from every corner.

The meeting transformed itself into a procession, headed by the women with torchlights. Till late in the night, these men and women marched through streets and by-lanes carrying the message for the next day.

All night there was feverish activity. The finishing touches to the arrangements were completed by 2 a.m. And by 4 a.m. the pickets with Red Flags had already reached every mill-gate. Over and above these there were pickets posted at strategic corners and chawl-gates. Then with baited breath we waited. I turned to Comrade Bukhari and asked : "What is your estimate of success ?" A mysterious jumble of lines gathered on his forehead and with the left eye half-closed, he haltingly said : "Success—I am certain about. But numbers—I fear it may not reach even 50 per cent. of November 7. You see, the odds are too great."

I asked Comrade Vaidya the same question. He said : "The Bombay working class has never failed us. But I agree the odds are very great. No press, no handbills, no effective opposition to give momentum, no effective aid from others. They are trying to kill us by isolation, by putting us in cold storage....Yes, yes, I believe we can draw easily about thirty thousand or so—because the issue is a straight political general strike, and the terror of the Defence of India Act is so widespread in the city."

I asked a young worker lad : "What are the workers feeling ? Will there be a strike ?" He was visibly annoyed. "Have you doubts about it ? Come to my chawl and speak to the workers themselves." And then the momentous day arrived. All our sober calculations were smashed up by the militant working class.

The Bombay textile proletariat rose to the occasion and gave a bigger and a better demonstration than November 7.

We had only motor-lorry to give the call on the day of the strike. The loud-speaker was not available. Nor were Comrades Dange or Mirajkar available.

Police arrangements were thorough. In front of every mill-gate, at every street-corner, the police with their lathis strutted about

under the direct supervision of a sergeant or a sub-inspector. In three or four places, armed policemen with rifles were present in batches of twelve and more. Four loaded police vans continuously patrolled the labour areas, going round and round, stooping before each mill-gate, exchanging greetings and going ahead.

But where were the workers ?

The slogan given was "You need not stir out of your houses. Do not throng near mill-gates, or the police may take the excuse for a lathi-charge or more." And the order was being obeyed. The streets remained empty, especially in front of mill-gates.

Picketing was hardly needed.

At the Morarjee Mills I got mixed up with some Bhaya workers. One of them was saying "Bhaya, this time we must not be disgraced like last time. We are not going in at all—nowhere near the gates. They blamed us as strike-breakers. Don't you remember the rebuke of Swamiji when he came here the other day?" And the others—to a man—concurred.

In Madanpura, the Muslim workers seemed equally determined. "This is our strike, too. The Britisher is no friend of Islam. And we know the Red Flag stands equally for everybody."

I asked "What is the position in your area?"

The prompt reply came "More than fifty per cent of Muslim workers have obeyed the Red Flag consciously." At Worli, a dozen women workers were arguing strenuously. I overheard "Who is going to stop me? Come, I shall lead you in."

"No, no, you are foolish—what will you gain by going in?"

"Are you going to lose wages for these good-for-nothings?"

"Don't say that—I am not coming. I am a follower of these Red Flaggers. Have you never heard Usha-tai speaking at a meeting?"

In the end all went home. They said the children at home were better company than the inhuman machines.

We almost ran into two volunteers with Red Flags being pursued by a dozen lathi-wielding policemen under the valiant lead of an Anglo-Indian Sergeant at Foras Road.

The volunteers complained that they had been assaulted, the flag was snatched away. We asked the sergeant why he was behaving in this fashion. "I don't want anybody lurking about here. They tried to hold a meeting in the garden next door to the Mill. Supposing they throw stones from there. I shall not permit it."

We had to sternly tell him that he was over-stepping the bounds of his duties, that he could not stop meetings like this in anticipation of stone-throwing.

"I do not care. I am the master here." And he started strutting about the place, brandishing his "stick."

A crowd had collected. We decided to report him to higher authorities. We got our volunteers to resume their meeting as well as picketposts with the flags. As we were moving away to the police station, the sergeant walked up. "Look here, mister, I did not mean any harm. The flag was accidentally torn. Honest truth. Let us treat the whole incident as closed."

And when we told him that his explanation was unsatisfactory, he said : "But I am an Indian, I was born in India, I wish to live in India. We are all brothers."

This was something new from an Anglo-Indian sergeant.

But the police tried to keep a neutral attitude in most cases. They did not take sides as on November 7.

At Worli the manager and higher staff of a mill came out and started using undue pressure on their men to get in, actually hustling some of them inside. The volunteer at the gate gave an extempore speech. In order to silence him a stone was pelted at him from inside the mill gate. It caught him in the back. The result was at once visible. Even the dozen or so who had weakened and were about to be dragged in walked away disgusted with the mill authorities. The manager made a piteous appeal, saying he was a "labour-wallah," but to no avail. In half an hour, the fifty who had previously gone in also came out and joined the strike. The mill completely closed down for the day by 9 a.m.

At Kohinoor Mills men were brought into the mills from 3 a.m. Nearly one thousand five hundred—nearly half the complement—were in by 8 a.m. But by 11.30 a.m. the whole mill came out 'en masse' and joined the strike.

Nearly 40 mills remained completely closed from the beginning, not a single worker crossing the gate. Another 15 tried to work with depleted complements, but most of them had to give up the ghost by 12 noon.

In the north of Bombay, where the labour areas are situated, all the colleges and the most important schools also closed down. Nearly then thousand students came on the streets. Three meetings

of students took place, and fiery speeches against War and declaring solidarity with the workers were made. It is interesting to note in this connection that these students attended the evening Kamgar Maidan meeting, and the workers greeted them with "Vidvarthi-Kamgaranchi Jai "

At Girgaon, a group of hotel workers went from restaurant to restaurant with two demands (1) One hotel-worker to join the group in propaganda, (2) the restaurant to shut down in sympathy with the strike

The Dharavi leather workers had joined the strike. So also a majority of the Ambarnath match factory workers. The seamen held a demonstration and meeting in sympathy. Sections of building workers laid down their tools

Comrade Taher was first arrested for "obstruction to traffic" and released. Once again he was arrested for "stone-throwing" and bailed out for Rs 10

Two volunteers were also arrested for "obstruction " and bailed out for varying amounts

But the whole day passed without a single affray or "incident " The workers behaved with great restraint and earned the unstinted unanimous compliment even from the hostile local press that the strike was absolutely peaceful and no force was used at any stage

By 9 a.m. the strike was practically complete. It totalled 89,000 workers when we approached the desk of Comrades Deshpande and Bhandarkar at the Kranti office for reports from the various centres. The comrades had worked with iron discipline. The organisation functioned through the new contacts and had worked wonderfully. The phoenix Mills workers, men and women, on strike for the last six months, had done yeomen service. After the success of November 7 interested parties had maintained that the success of the general strike was due to the unholy alliance made by the Communists with Ambedkar. Ambedkar and his party have now declared for co-operation with Britain. And yet the call of the Communists had found a bigger response from workers than November 7, and in a sober and quieter mood. The strike had made a record in numbers and in the peaceful way in which it was accomplished

As we went along to the historic Kamgar Maidan, Comrade Ranadive remarked "For the next strike, we need only one public

rally, one meetings of contacts and on handbill, and the task would be accomplished." Nobody contradicted him, so well was everybody impressed by the cool, silent and yet effective strength displayed by the workers. There was no fuss, no excitement, but with quiet, determined, grim faces they had forged a huge political weapon for themselves and evolved the technique of its use.

We reached the Kamgar Maidan and a sea of heads greeted us. The maidan was decked in huge Red Flags. Comrade Shahid, with his stentorian voice and wide, sweeping gestures, was casting a spell on the audience.

Comrade Guran retailed in song, in a beautifully-worded Marathi povada, the history of the Russian worker before, during and after the Revolution. Every phrase was eagerly taken in, and as he stretched the pitch of the last words, thundering applause greeted him. Comrade Tambitkar sang, and the huge multitude, transformed into a militant mood, sang with him, rocking to the tune.

Comrade Joglekar once again presided at the meeting and gave a stirring call to action. "We, the workers of Bombay, have proved to-day that we shall never be found wanting in the struggle for independence. English statesmen shall no more fix who is our friend. ...This Hitler whom they called a friend yesterday is now the worst criminal on earth...We have nothing to do with their quarrels. We stand for a free India and are determined to achieve our independence."

Comrade Ranadive moved the main resolution of the day. In a speech which went directly to the heart of the workers he explained how the war had come about, who was involved in it and why. He said - "If Gandhiji stands pledged to non-violence, it is not understandable why he wants India to support Britain which has resorted to violence... We have had a peaceful exhibition of our strength to-day, and we pledge that till the last worker is alive, we shall fight for the cause so dear to the Indian nation." He gave the history of workers' struggle in Bombay and India, and asked, "With what face can imperialists and foreign capitalist ask us to-day to help them? Have they forgotten their own misdeeds? And what is the guarantee that the shootings on workers, the Jallian-wallas, will not be repeated in the future? We are not likely to give milk to the serpent who has bitten us before and whose teeth have not

been drawn by us...If the Russian worker could effect a revolution during the last World War, the Indian worker can also rise to the same heights now."

He ended up amidst cheers when he declared - "They say the war will last for three years. We have sworn to-day to resist imperialism and within the three years, we are sure of bringing it down to dust."

The resolution was read out :—

"This meeting declares its solidarity with the international working class and the peoples of the world, who are being dragged into the most destructive war by the Imperialist Powers. The meeting regards the present war as a challenge to the international solidarity of the working-class, and declares that it is the common task of the workers and people of different countries to defeat this imperialist conspiracy against humanity, so that peace and goodwill is restored among the nations of the world

"This meeting condemns the Nazi aggression against Poland, and expresses its deep sympathy with the Polish people, who have been the victims of barbarous atrocities

"This meeting is further of opinion that the war between Nazi Germany and British Imperialism is born out of Imperialist rivalry, and that British Imperialism is neither defending democracy nor the Independence of nations.

"This meeting, therefore, is of opinion that loyalty to Indian freedom demands resistance to war on the part of the Indian people.

"This meeting strongly protests against the attempts of the Government to exploit Indian resources and man-power and impose the war on India in spite of India's declared opposition to it.

"This meeting strongly condemns the Viceregal Ordinances which virtually place the country under martial law regime and demands their immediate repeal.

"This meeting is of opinion that the full resources of the country should be utilised at this critical stage for forcing the pace of Indian democracy. This meeting, therefore, requests the coming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to give a bold lead to the country, by throwing overboard all compromise proposals and starting a nation-wide war-resistance movement.

"This meeting pledges itself to war resistance and declares that



any other path at this critical juncture would be a crime against Indian freedom and independence."

Comrade Bukhari in his simple and forceful Urdu, seconded the resolution. He explained the task of the working class in the present epoch, dilated on the foreign policy of Soviet Russia, and appealed to the Congress to launch a country-wide struggle from which we must emerge victorious.

Comrade Parulekar was greeted by the workers as he advanced to the microphone. He said : "To-day your success has created a stir in the Assemble Chambers. Prime Minister Kher acknowledged to me that the strike has been a phenomenal success. I greet you on your strength and unity."

Comrade Indulal Yagnik, Joint Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha, then rose, give fraternal greetings on behalf of the A.I.K.S and the Forward Bloc

"I am returning from my tour of Gujerat and I bring you the admiration and affection of the peasants. You know how to do things in a big way. We, the poor peasants, live in small isolated villages, but we too are copying your example. We have also started resistance against war."

The resolution was adopted amidst loud slogans of "Down with Imperialist War." "Long Live Indian Freedom."

The meeting adopted a resolution supporting the demand of workers for wage adjustment to prices.

The meeting is firmly of opinion that the rise in prices, permitted under Government authority, is extortionate and excessive. It has entailed severe hardship on poor and middle sections of the population.

"This meeting, therefore, demands immediate legislation guaranteeing increase in wages with the rise in prices. This meeting further calls upon the workers of Bombay to organise a conference to create sanctions behind the above demand."

The meeting then adopted a resolution demanding from the Congress Government a fair settlement to the Phoenix Mills Strike. Comrade Laljee Pendse explained in detail the need of building up the Girni Kamgar Union into a mass union and how a sound trade union can be the basis of a sound political party. Comrade Tambitkar made an impassioned appeal for the redress of the grievances of

the Phoenix Mills workers, retailed their miseries and showed how firmly they had borne the brunt of a long strike to save the Bombay working class from retrenchment and unemployment

The Marathi version of the International was cheered to an echo and the meeting dispersed

We were all tired out after a strenuous day. But the Kranti office carried on discussions for another two hours evaluating the gains measuring the next advance, wondering what the morrow would bring us

**NOTE :**

*The article 'Nation's Vanguard in Action' 100-00 to the Fore (Vide page 101-113) also deals with 'The Bombay Strike'. But the former article published in 'NATIONAL FRONT' of October 8, 1939 covers some additional points than this article (published in 'THE LABOUR MONTHLY' of December 1939). So we are publishing both the articles (Item No. 18 and Item No. 20).*

## MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

In the midst of the darkening shadows of imperialists war, the Congress is holding the most momentous session of its history. The eyes of the people of India, of the whole world are on Ramgarh.

The war has entered into a critical phase. Realising that its efforts have borne no fruits, realising that its chances of victory are daily receding the mad dog of British Imperialism is planning new crimes against humanity. It is striving to light conflagration in every land. It is striving to create a world front for war against the Soviet Union.

*Why this hatred against the Soviet Union ?*

The Empire that holds one fourth of humanity in bondage sees in the Soviet Union of free peoples its most mortal enemy. It sees in the Soviet Union the mighty friend of the Chinese people and of the whole colonial world. It sees in the Soviet Union the one country that stood by Spain and Abyssinia, by Czechoslovakia and Albania, to the bitter end. That is why it wants to destroy the Soviet Union. It armed Hitler with that sole purpose. But the Soviet-German pact smashed its plans.

It created in Finland a base for criminal war against the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union by its firm and timely action smashed that plan too, thus inflicting on Britain the most severe defeats she has ever suffered in her history. Maddened by these defeats the British rulers are hatching new conspiracies.

It is the rulers of Britain who are today the main aggressors, the chief enemy of mankind. It is they who want to continue the war at all costs. It is they who pour arms, men and money into Finland while they did not lift a finger to save Poland because they had hopes that the Germans after conquering Poland would invade Soviet Union. It is the British rulers who are determined to reject every peace offer. It is they who are trying to sell the Chinese people to the Japanese fascists in order to create an effective anti-Soviet

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front in the Far East. It is they who are conspiring with the monarchists and junkers of Germany against the German revolution. It is they who want to replace Hitler not by a people Republic but by the Kaiser or a reactionary military dictatorship, thus putting back the clock by twenty years. It is their ally Daladier who has destroyed all democracy in France and flung tens of thousands of Communists and anti-fascists in prison. What Tsarism was in the 19th century, the bulwark of world reaction, so is British imperialism to-day. They are fighting this war not for democracy but for eliminating Germany as an imperialist rival, for creating a world front against the Soviet Union. Maddened by the set-backs they have received, they are striving to break the stalemate provoking neutrals, by dragging every nation into war, by setting the whole world aflame. "After me the deluge" is their desperate motto.

Shall they succeed? Shall they succeed in destroying that is noble in human civilisation, in inflicting untold distress on humanity, in drawing the world into blood bath?

More than ever before, the answer rests with the Congress, with every Congress man, with the Indian people. **THE CONGRESS CAN SMASH BRITAIN'S MONSTROUS CONSPIRACY AGAINST HUMANITY** For the decision that we take at Ramgarh we shall have to answer before history, before humanity.

What is the reply of the Congress? What reply must the Indian people give? The Congress demanded clarification of British war-aims. Those aims have been clarified by every deed and every words of the British Government.

The Congress declared that Indian resources must not be used for imperialist war. The British reply is seen in the new budget, in the excess profits' Tax, in the increased Railway fares and freights.

The Congress declared that Indian blood must not be shed for Britain's war. Indian troops are being killed in France.

The Congress declared that it will not permit attack on the limited powers that the people won. The country groans under Ordinance Regime.

In words, full of insolence, the British rulers have heaped humiliation on the Congress everytime they have spoken on the

Congress demand. Less than a month ago the Viceroy had the audacity to ask us to work the Federal Scheme.

### **What is our reply ?**

Six months have passed since the outbreak of war. Civil Liberties are fast disappearing. The press has been gagged. The economic burden grows heavier everyday crushing our people. Fire has been concentrated against workers and students because they have been the first to act. Working class, kisan and student leaders are being thrown in prison in every province. *THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO CRUSH THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES IN ISOLATION.*

Yet the national leadership refuses to move. They dream of "honourable settlement" with the enemy. They pin their faith in negotiations. They seem to hug the hope that when the war enters into a serious phase, the British Government will be prepared to make more concessions for securing Congress co-operation.

Stagnation is spreading demoralisation in Congress ranks. Internal conflicts are becoming sharper. Communalist reactionaries are gathering strength in every part of the country. These are the disastrous results of the policy of "wait and see." The national movement is going to pieces. The leadership sees all this. It acts not against imperialism but against the Congress itself, against the forces of struggle, against those who demand action. By its disruptive attacks against the Bengal Congress, it throws one whole province out of the organised national movement. By all these measure it strives to reduce the Congress into a docile instrument of compromise. As a reaction to this the disruptive slogan of two Congresses rears its ugly head. Opportunists and carecrists are utilising this discontent of the rank and file for their aggrandisement for disrupting the Congress, for factional fight against the present leadership. While claiming to be radicals they enter into alliance with communalists, with anti-Congress reactionaries, thus spreading further demoralisation.

*THUS, IN THE MIDST OF A WORLD HISTORIC CONFLICT, AT A PERIOD WHEN WE STAND ON THE VERY THRESHOLD OF FREEDOM, WHEN WE CAN SMASH THE CHAINS OF SLAVERY AND PLAY A GLORIOUS ROLE IN BUILDING THE NEW WORLD ORDER. THE GREAT*

**ORGANIZATION WHICH THE PEOPLE HAVE BUILT BY DECADES OF SACRIFICE STANDS IN DANGER OF UTTER COLLAPSE**

Is there any reason for this inaction? NEVER WAS THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN SUCH A CRISIS AS IT IS TO-DAY. All the bluffs and blusterings of the British rulers cannot conceal their panic. British ships are being sunk every day. Despite the vaunted blockade Germany is more powerful today than she was at the outbreak of war. Without spreading the war, without winning new allies, Britain cannot hope to win. The gangster tactics which she has now adopted shows the utter desperation of her rulers.

While such is the situation, while faced with her imperialist rival on the one hand and frustrated by the moves of the Soviet Union on the other, Britain is in a desperate position. Our national-leaders are thinking in terms of "honourable settlement "

Can there be any honourable settlement short of the demand put forward by the Congress. the demand for constituent Assembly and Complete Independence ? No. Never

Will imperialism grant these demands. Can the Constituent Assembly be anything but a glorified edition of the Round Table Conference as long as imperialism holds away? Will imperialism surrender world domination to maintain which it unleashed the war ? No. Never. *SETTLEMENT WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL LEAD NOT TO SWARAJ BUT TO MOCKERY OF SWARAJ*

What is the maximum we will get by settlement ? Assurance of Dominion Status and some sort of Responsibility at the centre. The British army of occupation would remain. The Civil service would remain. The imperialist police would remain. The social structure would remain intact. Landlords, Money-lenders, princes would continue to suck the life-blood of the people. The stranglehold of British capital would continue. Workers would continue to live on starvation wages.

Such would be "Swaraj" that the Congress would get by negotiations, by the policy of wait and see. A leadership that expects more shows utter ignorance and bankruptcy or deliberately deceives the people.

Is that the Swaraj for which Congressmen have lived and died ?

Is that the vision which has inspired them to face lathis, prison and bullets?

*WHOM WOULD SUCH "SHARAJ" BENEFIT? WHO WOULD WANT THE CONGRESS TO FOLLOW THIS POLICY? THE INDUSTRIALISTS WHO WANT TO REAP WAR PROFITS, THE BIG MERCHANTS AND THE MILL OWNERS, NOT THE WORKERS, NOT THE PEASANTS, NOT THE PEOPLE OF INDIA*

Yet the Congress leadership that claims to represent the nation follows this policy, a policy that serves the interest not of the nation but of a handful of exploiters.

What do the people demand? What would correspond to their needs?

*A DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC WITH A PEOPLES ARMY*

*CANCELLATION OF ALL DEBTS,*

*ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM*

*EIGHT HOUR DAY AND GUARANTEED MINIMUM WAGE*

These demands, which are the demands of the people cannot be satisfied within the framework of imperialism, by negotiations with the British Government.

*THEREFORE THAT FRAMEWORK HAS TO BE SMASHED, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS TO BE OVERTHROWN, AND ON ITS RUINS MUST BE RAISED THE EDIFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE. FOR SUCH A STRUGGLE THE CONGRESS HAS TO PREPARE.*

The people are ready. On the Independence day 30,000 workers of Cawnpore went on strike. Mills in Bombay closed down. Lacs of Kisans rallied to celebrate the day, tens of thousands of students in every part of the country came out on the streets. Down with war, down with imperialism and down with compromise, these slogans rent the air. That day revealed the depth of popular feeling, the eagerness of the people for struggle. *THAT DAY SHOWED THE NEW WEAPONS THAT THE MASSES HAVE FORGED, THE WEAPONS OF MASS STRIKE BY WORKERS AND STUDENTS, THE WEAPON OF MASS ACTION BY THE PEASANTS, THE WEAPONS WITH WHICH IMPERIALISM MUST BE FOUGHT TO-DAY.*

The nation is ready. The nation will fight for freedom with the weapon of mass actions. Such was the meaning of 26th January.

This is our final battle. *WHAT THE NATION DEMANDS IS THE IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL LAUNCHING OF MASS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE BACKED BY NATION-WIDE STRIKES AND NO TAX AND NO-RENT CAMPAIGNS. NOT A RESTRICTED LIMITED SATYAGRAHA STRUGGLE AS INDICATED BY GANDHIJI IN HIS STATEMENTS*, a struggle which selected bands of Satyagrahis fight, while, masses play the role of on-lookers. Such struggle can only end in defeat or compromise. The entire fighting resources of the country, of our nation, of every class will have to be hurled against the enemy in this final battle. The most powerful weapons forged by the masses in their numerous battles will have to be used. Workers to go on general strike. Peasants to withhold rents and taxes. Students and citizens to denounce imperialist terror by hartals, strikes and mass demonstrations. Peoples to refuse to pay a pie to the Government. Mass Volunteer Corps of the Congress to defend the people against imperialist terror. Army to revolt against the British rulers. Such must be the weapons of to-day.

*Such struggle alone will lead to freedom.*

*THE WORKING CLASS IS ON THE MOVE.* On 2nd October 90,000 workers of Bombay struck against the war. Gigantic strikes on a scale, the like of which India has never seen are maturing in every Industrial centre. These struggles will draw lacs in active conflict with the Government. Against the terroristic regime of Hug, the heroic students and Congressmen of Bengal have begun the fight. In defiance of bans they are coming out holding demonstrations.

*FIRE IS SMOULDERING IN THE STATES AGAIN.* The heroic struggle of the Mysore people has failed. But despite the arrest of over 3000, the people are not down-hearted. The celebration of Independence Day in the States, the strike struggles that are breaking out in Gwalior and other States. All these indicate that a new wave of States Peoples movement is about to rise, a wave far more powerful than the last one.

*THE ARMY IS SEETHING WITH DISCONTENT.* Within a month of the war 35 soldiers and 3 Indian officers deserted from the Sikh Infantry Regiment at Jhansi. 500 soldiers with their guns deserted



from different regiments in the Punjab and took shelter in the jungles. If a nation-wide movement is launched such incidents will multiply. Soldiers will desert not to take shelter in jungles but to join the ranks of the people. The Government will find it increasingly difficult to use the Army against the people. The soldiers will begin to turn their guns against the British rulers.

What more do we need ? The Congress today is in a position to *UNITE ALL THESE ACTIONS AND ON THEIR BASIS DEVELOP A MOVEMENT OF IRRESISTIBLE STRENGTH, A MOVEMENT WHOSE SMASHING IMPACT WILL SHATTER THE BRITISH EMPIRE.*

Shall the Congress dare and act?

Ramgarh has to give the reply on that reply shall depend the fate of the Congress, of India, of humanity.

*RAMGARH MUST DEMAND THAT ALL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, NEGOTIATIONS THAT ONLY HUMILIATE THE NATIONS, MUST STOP. RAMGARH MUST DECLARE THAT BY RAISING A MASS VOLUNTEER CORPS, BY LAUNCHING STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST TERROR, BY ACTIVELY SUPPORTING EVERY ACTION OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE WAR, BY FORGING THE WEAPON OF MASS STRIKE, MASS NO-RENT, MASS ACTION OF EVERY TYPE, THE CONGRESS SHALL PREPARE FOR THE FINAL BATTLE.* This and not the fulfilment of the constructive programme, will be real preparation for battle, battle for smashing British rule, for convening the Constituent Assembly, for raising on the ruins of the Empire the edifice of the Peoples' Democratic Republic.

History has placed before the Congress the task of freeing the people of India bondage. History has placed before the Congress the task of freeing the world from strangle-hold of the monster of British imperialism. History has created for the rest an opportunity that comes once in centuries.

If the Congress seizes the opportunity, if it fulfills its tasks, if it launches mass struggle against British rule, it will aid the world forces of revolution, It will aid the British people in their fight against Chamberlain. It will aid the Chinese people, whom Chamberlain is trying to sell to Japan. It will aid the peoples of

France and Germany who are fighting against their imperialist rulers. *IT WILL LIGHT REVOLUTIONARY CONFLAGRATION IN EVERY COUNTRY HELD IN BONDAGE. TERMINATE THE WAR AND THUS SAVE SANITY FROM DESTRUCTION.*

This is what the world expects of us. This is what history demands of us.

*INDIA HELD IN BONDAGE BY BRITAIN, INDIA REVILED AND RIDICULED BY BRITISHERS SHALL COME FORWARD AS THE SAVIOUR OF HUMANITY, AS THE HARBINGER OF A NEW ERA, THE CREATORS OF A NEW WORLD ORDER.*

And the Congress, the great and glorious organisation of our people, shall lead India to this path.

*THIS MUST BE RAMGARH'S VERDICT*

## WE WARN

Poona Session of A.I.C.C

### We Warn

At this session on the A.I.C.C. which has been convened at one of the most critical moments in our history, we Communists deem it our duty to speak without the slightest hesitation or equivocation and state plainly what we think of the policy that is being pursued by the Working Committee

### When are we meeting and what for ?

The British Empire is tottering. Are we meeting to deliver it the decisive blow and win freedom ? No.

3,000 Congressmen are in prison or internment. News of fresh arrests pour in every way. The Press has been gagged. Terror stalks the land. 20 crores of rupees of new war-burdens have been imposed. Indian soldiers have been killed in France in Britain's war. Perhaps more are being killed in Africa. Are we meeting to give our answer to these outrages ? No.

30,000 Congressmen enrolled themselves as Satyagrahis because of the solemn assurances given at Ramgarh. Are we meeting to give them the marching order ? No.

### What then are we meeting here for ?

We have been called together just to make a fresh offer to the British Government and then again wait for its reply. We have been called to endorse the new policy of the Working Committee, the policy embodied in the resolution adopted by it on July 8th.

The offer that has been made on behalf of the Congress to the British Government is there in that resolution. The British

Government must make a declaration acknowledging the freedom of India. It must also agree to form a provisional government at the Centre commanding the confidence of the elected members of the Legislature. If that is done, the Congress will return to office in provinces, participate in the new Central Government and "throw its full weight in the organisation of the defence of the country". This, the Congress President himself has made clear, means that the Congress will co-operate with the British Government in its war efforts.

Whether or not the British Government will fulfil these conditions is not the issue before the A.I.C.C. What the A.I.C.C. has to consider is whether the offer itself is in conformity with the ideal, goal and declared programme of the Congress.

We say it is not. We say that if the A.I.C.C. sets its seal of approval on this policy, it will be guilty of the most heinous crime against the national movement. It will be guilty of national betrayal. We say this not because we love to indulge in strong words or want to insult the Working Committee leaders but because we claim to realise what this policy means and where it will lead to. This is not the time for platitudes, euphemisms and equivocations. The situation is too serious. The fate of the Congress is at stake. The truth must be told, the plain truth, the harsh truth.

*This resolution repudiates the goal of independence and the slogan of constituent assembly. It repudiates the policy of opposition to imperialist war and substitutes for it the policy of support to the war. It repudiates the anti-imperialist struggle itself. It repudiates everything that the congress has stood for during the last 20 years.*

If carried out, the policy it embodies will destroy the achievements of twenty year of struggle. It will destroy the Congress itself.

This is no phantasy. We are not conjuring up a spectre to frighten Congressmen. It is the stark reality, the true meaning of this resolution.

**What price must we pay ?**

Whether in the provinces or at the Centre, Ministries to-day will

not have even that power which they had in the past. They would be, first and foremost, Ministries, for the prosecution of war. Ministries for the maintenance of Law and Order. With loyalists and communalist reactionaries, Congressmen will have to join hand to carry out these measures.

They will not have the power to repeal the Defence of India Act which has already claimed 3,000 Congressmen as victims but will have, on the contrary, to operate that Act ruthlessly and rigidly. They will have to ban meetings and demonstrations against the war and suppress the anti-war movement. They will have to throw Congressmen in jail for daring to oppose war measures. They will have to act as recruiting agents of Imperialism and enrol Indians for being butchered in Britain's war. They will have to enrol Indians in order to shoot Indians in defence of Britain's imperial interests here. They will have to impose fresh burdens on the people and bleed them for keeping Britain's war machine going. And when unable to bear that burden and because of the effects of the agrarian crisis that is deepening every day, the Kisan rises in revolt, they will have to drown that revolt in blood. They will have to bolster up British prestige which has suffered death blow in this war and create confidence in the stability of the British Government. They will have to strengthen the Army and thus forge weapons that will be used to crush our national movement itself. They will have to forge the chains of national slavery.

All these things they must do or they will not remain in office even for a day, for that is what "defence of India" means. Therefore, we call it the policy of national betrayal.

Assurances may be given to us that these things will not be done but we say without any hesitation that we can have no faith in such assurances. Every policy has its-implications and no matter how well-meaning our leaders are, they cannot escape the implications of the policy that they are pursuing. That policy itself will drive them to take these measures.

This policy, if carried out, will mean the alliance of Congress with counter-revolution. It will mean destruction of the unity of the people that has been forged by twenty years of struggle, the unity cemented by the blood of our martyrs. It will mean the death of the Congress.

**And for what?**

For what is the Congress being asked to pay this frightful price ? For an assurance—a declaration — by the British Government ?

Even if the British Government were to make that declaration and "acknowledge" the freedom of India, what is that declaration worth ? Will India be permitted to ASSERT her freedom by declaring that she has nothing to do with this predatory war ? No

The dictatorial powers of the Viceroy and the Governors would remain, the British Army of Occupation would remain, the Civil Service and the police would remain, the princes and landlords who form the pillars of Imperialism would remain. To imagine that the British Government would make—whether now or in future—any concession that would enable the Congress to destroy these props and pillars of British rule, is to indulge in day-dreams. We may have a Congressman as Defence Minister but does that mean that the British-Indian Army will cease to be a weapon to hold us down in bondage and become an army of National Defence ? During years of Provincial Autonomy, Congress Ministers had far greater control over the police department than what any Defence Minister to-day can have over the Army. Did that mean any change in the CHARACTER of the Indian Police Force ? It did not and it could not. Created by the British Government, officered by British and pro-British persons, completely free from any real control by popular Ministries, the Army, the Police and the Services would remain what they are to-day—instruments of imperialist rule and *IT IS IN THEM AND NOT IN THE LEGISLATURES* that real power rests. Only their dissolution and disbursement and the creation of a People's Militia would mean real freedom. Only such freedom would enable the Congress to destroy the power and position of princes, landlords and other reactionary vested interests and lay the foundation of a new social order based on democracy and well being of the people. That is the kind of freedom that the masses want. Everything else is a mockery, that may bring a few crumbs to the big industrialists and businessmen but would bring no relief to the people.

If that is the freedom that were visualised by our leaders, if that is the freedom that they had demanded, they would not

have waited for British Government's reply, for they know full well that such freedom can never be conceded. The very fact, despite the rebuffs that the British Government has given, a FRESH OFFER has been made, the very fact that they are WAITING for the reply, shows that their demand falls far short of freedom. THEY HAVE DEMANDED AN ASSURANCE AND RESPONSIBLE CENTRE. They have demanded mess of pottage and in return for that, are ready to support the war. How could things come to this tragic pass? How could such a shameless policy be pursued with impunity and be sought to be imposed on the entire Congress?

It did not happen in one day. *This policy is the logical culmination of the policy of constitutionalism and compromise which has always been there and which entrenched itself firmly in the period of ministries.*

Rajaji is the framer of this resolution, but no member of the Working Committee, no leader of the Congress who had a hand in shaping the policy of the last three years, either Gandhiji nor Nehru, can escape responsibility for what has happened to-day, for a shame and disgrace that in a session of the All-India Congress Committee one has to argue against the line of alliance of the Congress with reactionary leaders of the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and confirmed toadies for the prosecution of imperialist war.

### Hopes and Fears

There never was any ambiguity about the policy that the Congress MUST pursue in an Imperialist War. That policy, laid down at Haripura and reiterated at every Congress Session, was clear and unequivocal. *INDIA WILL BE NO PARTY TO IMPERIALIST WAR AND WILL NOT PERMIT HER MANPOWER AND RESOURCES TO BE EXPLOITED IN THE INTERESTS OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM. IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTEMPT BEING MADE TO INVOLVE INDIA IN WAR THIS WILL BE RESISTED.*

**What happened to that declaration when the war broke out?**

Standing here at the Session of the A.I.C.C. as we put this question, our mind goes back to those days when the news of the

outbreak of war arrived. What wave of enthusiasm swept over the country. What tremendous urge for action animated masses of Congressmen'. What hopes were kindled in every breast ! Mass meetings against the war in every part of the country, mass demonstrations in every city, millions ready to respond to the call of the Congress and strike for freedom! Faith in the leaders, Congressmen had, confidence in victory they had, do or die spirit they had. When we remember all that and contrast the situation that existed then with the situation as it exists to-day, when we contrast the spirit, the enthusiasm and the confidence of those days with the panic, lifelessness and demoralisation of to-day, then only we realise the difference between what could have been done had what was done, then only we realise the full extent of the crime that was committed against the nation.

Even when on his way to Simla at the call of the Viceroy, Gandhij was getting into the train at Delhi, crowds greeted him with the slogan : "We do not want any understanding." (See Harijan, Sept., 9th)

If, therefore, the Working Committee were to be guided by the resolutions of the congress and by the voice of the People, its line was clear — *UNCONDITIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE WAR, IMMEDIATE LAUNCHING OF NATIONAL STRUGGLE.*

That did not happen. All that was done was to issue a long-winded statement full of vague phrases and sickening platitudes about the coming "new order". The British Government was asked to declare its war aims as though the whole world did not know what those aims were *"IF THE WAR IS TO DEFEND THE STATUS QUO, IMPERIALIST POSSESSIONS AND COLONIES AND VESTED INTERESTS, THEN INDIA CAN HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT "* What steps the Congress would take were made conditional upon declarations of the British Government. The door was kept open for bargaining, for compromise. And in order to exert pressure on the Government and to satisfy Congressmen, the declaration was made that "decision cannot long be delayed."

*Thus, within two weeks of the outbreak of the War, the Haripura policy of UNCONDITIONAL OPPOSITION to War had been repudiated and the new policy of CONDITIONAL CO-OPERATION had been adopted. What was the basis of the new policy ? ILLUSION AND FEAR. Illusion that faced with*



*war difficulties*, the British Government would make major concessions. Fear that a mass movement launched in the period of war, in the period of growing mass distress and increasingly explosive situation, would break all restrictions and develop into revolutionary movement.

We make these statements with full consciousness of our responsibilities as A.I.C.C. members. We do not at all subscribe to the view that the stalemate which has worked havoc and reduced the Congress to its present plight was just an accident, just an indication that our leaders were waiting for a better time to strike or that they had no policy. We have stated and we repeat, that hope and fear—hope of concession and fear of revolution—lief at the root on the policy ~~that~~ they have pursued even since the outbreak of War. Scores of statements and articles could be quoted to prove this but only one will suffice. When the Viceroy made his now-famous speech at the Orient Club which "India's goal was defined to be Dominion Status. Gandhiji greeted that pronouncement and declared that he saw in it "GERMS OF A SETTLEMENT HONOURABLE TO BOTH NATIONS" (Harijan, Jan 20, '40). In the course of the same statement, he said : *"IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO ME BY A CONGRESSMAN WIELDING GREAT INFLUENCE THAT AS SOON AS I DECLARE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, I WOULD FIND STAGGERING RESPONSE THIS TIME. THE WHOLE LABOUR WORLD AND THE KISANS IN MANY PARTS WILL, HE ASSURES ME, DECLARE A SIMULTANEOUS STRIKE. I TOLD HIM THAT IF THAT HAPPENED, I SHOULD BE MOST EMBARRASSED AND ALL MY PLANS WOULD BE UPSET."*

Here is the most tragic spectacle — the supreme leader of the Congress waiting for crumb from imperialism, seeking in every gesture of the Government the "germs of honourable settlement", afraid not that masses will not respond but that there will be "staggering response" and his "plans would be upset". Since, due to imperialist intransigence the "germs of honourable settlement" could not be found and since, due to fear that there would be "staggering response", struggle could not be launched, stalemate was the only policy that could be pursued. That became the "new technique" of compromise.

## Assurances Broken

"Decision cannot long be delayed" was the assurance given in September 1939, and yet nothing was done till Ramgarh, i.e., for full six months. Mass opposition to the War rose higher and higher. 90,000 workers of Bombay went on one-day strike to record protest against the War. Mass meetings and demonstrations against the War, against the ordinance, against repressive measures were held throughout the country. The Independence Day 1940 witnessed scenes the like of which had not been seen since the Civil Disobedience days. Despite the bans issued by Gandhiji and the Congress President, mass strikes became the chief feature of the day, mass strikes of workers, mass strikes of students, gigantic peasant demonstrations in rural areas. *IT BECAME A DAY OF NATIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE WAR.*

Simultaneously developed actions against the effects of the war, against economic distress and suppression of civil liberties. The great war allowance strike of the Bombay workers, the gigantic student strikes in Calcutta against the Ordinance regime, the rising strikes wave in Behar—all these indicated the depth of the crisis and the growing militancy of the people.

Restlessness grew in Congress ranks. Why this stalemate?—Was the question they raised everywhere. They demanded struggle, they demanded action. Unlike the Congress, the Government was not sitting quiet. It was striking hard against the workers, peasants and students movements. Militant Congressmen, Communists and Socialists were being thrown in jail by hundreds.

In this background Ramgarh met. "Decision cannot long be delayed"—this assurance should no longer satisfy Congressmen. Hence a resolution was placed before the session which definitely described the war as an imperialist war, stated that "the exploitation of Indian resources in this war is an Affront to them which no self-respecting and freedom-loving nation can tolerate" and finally declared that the withdrawal of Ministries was a "preliminary step" which would "naturally be followed by civil disobedience."

Masses of Congressmen and Congress Socialists hailed it as a resolution of struggle. We had no such illusions. We saw the real meaning of the resolution and its real purpose—threat to the

Government and assurance to Congressmen. We realised that stalemate would be continued. Therefore, we voted against the resolution, and appealed to all delegates to do likewise. Our spokesmen exposed the real nature of the resolution and warned Congressmen against the deception that was being practised on them.

*But the overwhelming majority of delegates thought otherwise. When Civil Disobedience was declared to be the NEXT STEP they believed that it was IMMINENT. As regards our warning that the leaders were not even dreaming of MASS civil Disobedience, that warning fell on deaf ears because Rajendra Babu who moved the resolution and Pandit Jawaharlal who supported it, both gave the assurance that it would be "STRUGGLE ON A MASS SCALE" and would "SURPASS ALL PAST MOVEMENTS IN RESPECT OF ITS EXTENT AND ALIGNMENT." These were their very words.*

If any doubts remained after that, these were dispelled by the words of Gandhiji himself, who according to the report of his speech that appeared in the *Harijan* of March 30th, said :

*"ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE WORD 'MASS' BE INSERTED BEFORE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. WELL, IF IT IS NOT MASS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, IS IT TO BE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE BY A HANDFUL? IN THAT CASE, I SHOULD NOT HAVE COME TO YOU."*

Yet, within less than two weeks after Ramgarh, appeared the well-known article of Gandhiji, "Every Congress Committee a Satyagrah Committee" in which he made it clear that Civil Disobedience, "IF IT MUST COME" would be Civil Disobedience not by masses but by registered Satyagrahis. There must be no struggles in States, no strikes, not even mass defiance of Government orders. "I SHALL BE ABLE TO FIGHT WITH A VERY SMALL ARMY OF HONEST SATYAGRAHIS" was the declaration made by the "General" who thirteen days ago had told the Congress delegates, "IS IT TO BE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE BY A HANDFUL IN THAT CASE, I SHOULD NOT HAVE COME TO YOU." And the irony is that these two statements appear in the same issue of the *Harijan*, the issue of 30th March.

It was not a plan of struggle. It was, at best, a plan for bringing pressure on the Government. It was a plan to secure "honourable

settlement" and avert "red ruin". It was a plan which if carried out, would mean a "struggle" of the most restricted kind, a sham struggle that could only lead to compromise or surrender

This was made still more clear by Gandhiji in his statement of 27th April : *SO FAR AS I CAN SEE AT PRESENT, MASS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IS MOST UNLIKELY THE CHOICE LIES BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ON A VERY LARGE SCALE, VERY RESTRICTED OR CONFINED ONLY TO ME "*

Can anyone accuse us of discourtesy, if we say that a most shameful deception was practised on Congressmen at Ramgarh? Can anyone accuse us of being impolite if we say that the whole thing was a gigantic hoax the like of which the world has never seen before ?

### **A Shameful Spectacle**

But even worse was to come and that came when the storm burst on the Western Front and the British ruler who brag so much about their prowess and who are brave only when they have to shoot unarmed Indians, ran like rabbits to save their lives. Throwing overboard every resolution of the Congress, forgetting that the Congress had always placed Nazism and imperialism in the same category, Rajendra Babu hastened to declare that Britain was better than Hitler and he wished for British victory in the war. These followed the sickening spectacle of Satyamurthi praying for the success of the British; Rajaji, Mrs Naidu, Mr Asaf Ali and a host of others urging Britain "in her own interests" and in order to ensure her own victory" to do "justice" to India. The words of the Congress president at Ramgarh : "We do not want to see British Imperialism triumphant" were forgotten. Statements were issued and speeches were made, editorials were written in leading Congress papers like **National Herald** and **Bombay Chronicle** and others, that seemed to come from lackeys of British imperialism and that made every honest Congressman burn with shame and indignation.

Time and again in the past, when we Communists and left Congressmen raised our voice against the policy of compromise, we were threatened with disciplinary action but where these leaders were trampling underfoot every Congress resolution and bringing

shame and disgrace upon the nation, the Working Committee took no notice. Gandhiji issued a ban against Anti-Repression Day which was to be organised by Kerala Congressmen on 26th May but he said not a word against Satyamurthi who on the same day prayed for the success of Britain

While this miserable drama was being played, while Congress leaders were vying with confirmed toadies in wishing success to "British democracy", Nehru's voice was heard : No struggle now. *IT IS NOT THE WAY OF SATYAGRAHIS TO STRIKE WHEN THE ENEMY IS IN PERIL.* (16th May). And Gandhiji closed the whole chapter by saying : *"WE MUST WAIT TILL THE HEAT OF BATTLE IN THE HEART OF ALLIED COUNTRIES SUBSIDES "* (1st June) *30,000 Congressmen who on the basis of the solemn assurances given at Ramgarh had enrolled themselves as Satyagrahis were asked to abandon all thoughts of struggle.*

### Playing with nation's fate

In this way the Congress policy of resistance to war was sabotaged, in this way solemn assurances were broken, in this way demoralisation was sown in Congress ranks and the great ardour, enthusiasm and do-or-die spirit that prevailed in the early days of the war were slowly killed. With the destiny of a great nation, with the honour of a great organisation, they played the sordid game of bargain and compromise. Instead of steeling the heart of the people for the final and decisive battle, instead of creating in Congressmen spirit and confidence, they spread demoralisation and despair. "You are not ready, you are not sufficiently non-violent, you must not embarrass Britain."—Such messages were broadcast by Gandhiji week after week. Even a nation of heroes would have been reduced to being demoralised creatures after one year of such broken promises, such equivocations and lies, such "messages".

Did the developments in the war situation justify the abandonment of struggle? British had suffered defeat after defeat but that had only exposed the rottenness, cowardice and treachery of the British rulers, treachery to their Allies, treachery to their own people. "If the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions and colonies...." This ran the Working Committee's statement of September '39, the statement drafted by Pandit Nehru. Can Pt.

Nehru deny that even to-day the war is being waged by Britain to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions and colonies?" And to what length they have gone? Tying Egypt to their war-chariot and exposing the Egyptian people to the horrors of invasion and bombing raids, betraying the heroic people of China in order to save their own possessions from Japan's attack—such are the acts in the carrying out of which Britain must not be "embarrassed" by "true Satyagrahis" That was the verdict of Gandhiji, that was the verdict of Nehru

No This moral mask, this mask of non-violence cannot conceal the real truth, the sordid truth that the developments in the war situation once again kindled the hope that NOW Britain would make concessions and no struggle of any sort would be needed

Gandhiji and perhaps Nehru too, would have liked to stop here Conscious of the disastrous implications of total surrender and going back to Ministries, implications which Gandhiji himself has pointed out (*Harijan*, July 6), they would have preferred the stalemate to continue but that could no longer be done The policy of stalemate had its own logic and that logic was working itself out The floodgate of opportunism had been opened wide *If stalemate was not broken by struggle, it would break the other way—by surrender* If the Government refuses to climb down, THE CONGRESS must climb down The extreme right-wingers led by Rajaji got grip over the working Committee and their line became THE line

Gandhiji may dislike the length to which things have gone, others may moan but can they deny that it is they who, by their whole policy, have brought things to this pass? They cannot do that and therefore, they cannot put up any resistance to Rajaji's line That line is a logical continuation of their own line

### **The Defence lie**

In this way through bluffs and assurances, through lies and equivocations, through broken promises, the ground was prepared for the final betrayal, for compromise with Imperialism Dreaming in terms of "honourable settlement", fondly hoping with each British defeat that NOW concessions would be made, fearing "staggering response" and "red ruin" if struggle is launched, they gave up one stand after another, moved farther away from the declared Congress

policy and sank deeper and deeper into the stinking mire of opportunism

Yet, the RAPIDITY with which the "about-turn" during the last two months was made, may appear to many to be inexplicable. From neutrality to co-operation, from talks of struggle to "National Government"—how could this happen?

*THIS WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE MOST ATROCIOUS LIE EVER TOLD - THE DEFENCE LIE!*

Congress Ministries will "organise defence", we are told. Defence OF WHAT and AGAINST WHOM? It can be nothing, as we have already shown, except defence of Indian slavery against action by the Indian people, defence of British imperialist rule. No matter what our leaders say and want, this is ALL they CAN defend to-day

Yet, defence of India, the slogan of British Imperialism, became the slogan of every leader from Rajaji to Subhas Bose, disgusting statements were issued that we are like "domestic pets" left in the jungle, panic was created that India would fall helpless victim to foreign invasion and that there were dangers of "internal disorder", every imperialist lie was repeated and by responsible Congress leaders and thus the slogans of national struggle and Constituent Assembly were replaced by the slogans of "National Defence" and "National Government". In order to do that and thus create the basis of compromise, they threw away the mask of non-violence.

We Communists do not believe in the creed of non-violence. We declare boldly and proudly that we consider it to be the sacred right of a nation to resort to arms in order to win freedom and in order to defend freedom. If the Working Committee leaders had the courage to make the revolutionary declaration that they consider the ideology and creed of non-violence to be an obstacle in the path of development of national struggle, we would have acclaimed that declaration. But when they express readiness to resort to arms in order to "defend India" as it is to-day, i.e. to defend BRITISH RULE IN INDIA, and in order to "maintain order", i.e. IMPERIALIST ORDER and at the same time denounce mass actions on the plea of non-violence, we have no hesitation in saying that non-violence with

them is only a mask, a cloak to conceal cowardice and inaction and fear of mass struggle.

Non-violence was a handy weapon to restrict and restrain struggle, to sabotage mass action, to apply the new technique of restricted Satyagraha. Now that weapon is inconvenient and hence is given up in "the sphere of external aggression and internal disorder."

### **Nehru's Dream**

We know full well what hopes are driving many of them towards compromise. They believe that Britain is going to lose the war and if Congress Ministries are in office then, they would be able to "take over" power. No illusion could be more dangerous. The Viceroy and Governors would remain, the Army and Police would remain, the Princes and landlords on whom Imperialism relies for support would remain. If defeated in this war, Britain will have to renounce her hegemony over Europe and parts of her colonial empire and that loss she will strive to make up by tightening her grip over India, by exploiting India all the more. And if by any chance Britain wins, then too the colossal expenditure that the war would involve, she will strive to make up by bleeding India white.

Too often one hears Pandit Nehru speaking about the "fading away" of Empires, of the "inevitability" of the coming "new order". Empires never FADE AWAY, they have to be SMASHED by the action of the people themselves, and the "new order" that will come to India after the war may be — or rather WILL BE if stalemate is continued or surrender is made — "new order" of a type very different from what Nehru is dreaming. It will be the "new order" of naked terrorist dictatorship. The chains of slavery never fall off. They have to be broken and slaves who do not seize the opportunity to break them and dream of "new order" remain slaves and desire to remain slaves.

When did we stand a year ago and where have we come to-day? The Congress inspired fear in the British Government, it inspired respect in the masses. To-day the British Government treats the Congress with contempt and does not even reply to its piteous appeals for co-operation. To-day Congress prestige and Congress influence have sunk lower than at any time in the last twenty years. Is there any wonder? An organisation that fails to take definite stand



on the most momentous event of the era — the Imperialist War — even after full eleven months. an organisation that utters threats and gives assurances and then fails to stand by its words, an organisation whose leaders defy with inpusity its solemn resolutions — such an organisation can inspire neither fear nor respect. In a province like U.P. which is the most powerful fortress of the Congress in the country, Government agents to-day dare to collect funds for the war by the imposition of forcible levies on Kisans. People everywhere show no enthusiasm to join the Congress and the total membership of the Congress may fall steeply this year. Within the ranks of Congressmen disintegration has started. Orissa is an ominous pointer. Congress M.L.A.'s joining toadies and reactionaries to form Coalition Ministry — could one dream of it a year back?

Thus the great organisation which people have built with decades of sacrifice, to which they look for lead, which had become the symbol of unity and struggle, stands in danger of going to pieces.

Those who do not take note of all these and continue to cherish illusions and dream of "new order" commit the gravest crime against the freedom movement.

### Our Final Words

We have little more to say. It is a supreme tragedy that at a moment when 3000 Congressmen have been thrown in prison or are in internment, at a moment when 20 crores of rupees of fresh war burdens have been imposed and war levies are being forcibly collected, at a moment when Ordinance regime is crushing the very life of the nation at such a moment, we have met here not to give the long-delayed marching order but to put our seal of approval on a policy *which would perpetuate all these horrors with the sanction and approval of the congress*. It is a supreme tragedy that at a moment when this rotten empire is collapsing and cannot withstand one determined blow, not only are we being prevented from delivering that blow but are being asked to bolster up that empire. The prison walls are crumbling but the slaves are being asked to wait and watch.

What show are we putting up before the whole world? What lead are we giving to enslaved nations?

Here in this land of ours, ravaged by two centuries of British rule, here with millions and millions ready to respond to our call and strike the final blow to end this shame and degradation for once and all, here faced with an opportunity the like of which comes once in centuries, we stand paralysed — awaiting gestures of goodwill, dreaming in terms of assurances and "honourable settlement". Before this crime which is being committed after two decades of national struggle, pales into insignificance even the terrible crime that was committed by Indian leaders in the last war — the crime of Indians being enrolled to lay down their lives in order to add to the number of Britain's slaves. That crime was rewarded with Jallianwallabagh massacres, mass shootings, outrages on women and crawling orders. Similar rewards will come once this war is over — no matter with whose victory — and Britain has her hands free. Then our leaders will repent but it will be too late.

This is one of the most tragic hours in the history of the Congress but it can be made one of the most glorious. Never was the British Government in such crisis. Its prestige has been shattered, its credit has gone, it is completely at our mercy. It cannot even rely on its soldiers and police. Like magic will work the call of the Congress at this historic moment. Once the Congress gives the call and summons the people to revolt, all the despair and defeatism we see all around will vanish, a wave will rise before which no obstacles can stand. Millions and millions of arms will be raised and this despotic rule, now guarded by the bayonets of mercenaries, will be smashed to bits.

This is no dream. This can be made a reality. The nation demands of the Congress to make it a reality.

We do not know to what extent we shall be able to influence the A.I.C.C. Ours may be a cry in the wilderness here but we know that this represents the urge of the people and we deem it our duty to declare that if this policy is carried out and the Congress tied to the war-chariot of British Imperialism, no considerations of discipline will prevent us from doing all we can to defeat that policy. We shall not split away from the Congress nor form another Congress but with all our might, we shall strive to rally masses of Congressmen and masses of people to save the Congress from

the shame and degradation which will be its lot if the compromisers succeed. We know what that means. We know that many of us will be expelled from the Congress. We know that as to-day — or may be more than to-day — the Government, the "National Government" of Rajaji's dream, will concentrate fire against us Communists. Such measures shall not swerve us from our path. Confident of the correctness of our policy, confident that the policy alone is in conformity with the ideal, goal and traditions of the Congress and is in the best interest of the nation, we shall face unflinchingly whatever might come. History will judge us.

## APPENDIX

### Resolution you are asked to repudiate

#### Haripura

"India can be no party to such an imperialist war and will not permit her man-power and resources to be exploited in the interests of British Imperialism. Nor can India join any war without the express consent of her people. The Congress, therefore, entirely disapproved of war preparations being made in India and large-scale manouvre and air-raid precautions by which it has been sought to spread an atmosphere of approaching war in India. In the event of an attempt being made to involve India in a war, this will be resisted."

From the resolution on War and  
Foreign policy — February 1938

#### Tripuri

"The Congress is opposed to imperialism and fascism alike and is convinced that world peace and progress required the ending of both of these. In the opinion of the Congress, it is urgently necessary for India to direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation, thereby keeping aloof from both imperialism and fascism, and pursuing her path of peace and freedom."

From the Resolution on Foreign Policy  
—March 1939

### **Ramgarh**

"...the Congress cannot in any way directly or indirectly be a party to the war which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress therefore strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material."

From Ramgarh Resolution

—March 1940

## THE IMPENDING AGRARIAN CRISIS AND OUR TASKS

The war has entered into a new phase. The phase of world conflagration, of decisive and grim battles has begun. The series of military disasters and defeats which the German Army has inflicted on British imperialism has made its position extremely precarious. France has collapsed. Britain has lost all points of vantage in North-west Europe. Now with the entry of Italy further set-backs in the Mediterranean are in store for it. British imperialism is fighting with its back to the wall. It is straining every nerve to drag U.S.A. into the war. It is mobilising every ounce of resources under its control in Britain, in the dominions, colonies and in India for the conflict. For it is a life and death struggle which it is waging. This means rapidly mounting economic and political pressure on the toiling masses of England and France, on the people of India and the colonies.

### Perspective at the Outbreak of War

*WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT OF THIS NEW PHASE OF THE WAR ON THE AGRARIAN ECONOMY AND ON THE MILLIONS OF THE PEASANT MASSES? IS IT NECESSARY TO MODIFY THE SLOGANS WHICH WE ISSUED FOR THE KISAN FRONT AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR?*

What was the perspective we visualised when the war broke out? It was expected that the prices of the agrarian commodities would rise, but that the speculator, the middleman would not allow the benefit of this rise of prices to reach the kisan. On the other hand the kisan would have to pay higher prices for industrial goods e.g., tools, salt, oil, matches, cloth etc. Hence our main slogans were (1) fix the MINIMUM prices which the kisan must get for

*Taken from : Party Circular No 59 of the Communist Party of India and published in the "PARTY LETTER" dated 20th August 1940.*

his produce (2) check speculation, profiteering and violent fluctuation of prices (3) control prices of industrial goods.

### **Imperialist Policy and Fall of Prices**

It very soon became clear that it was the policy of the imperialist Government to rigorously control the prices of the agricultural commodities while allowing a controlled rise for the prices of industrial goods. The purpose was to obtain a cheap supply of raw materials it wanted. As the war entered into the new phase, imperialism promulgated a series of ordinances imposing export restrictions on a series of agricultural commodities (seeds, oilcakes, wheat etc.). As one after another the countries of Europe which entered the war disappeared from the export list, the possibilities of export narrowed down still further. The difficulties of transport made countries like America go in for substitutes for jute. All these factors worked together and have resulted in a complete collapse of the price structure of the agrarian commodities. It is stated that at present the prices of the chief commercial crops of India which are money crops of the Indian kisan are below the world market prices. These conditions would worsen in the coming months and one may expect a severe slump in agrarian prices after the next crop season.

Some idea of the precipitous fall of the chief commercial crops and their by-products can be got from the following table. The figures are from the market page of the TIMES OF INDIA of the corresponding dates.

### **Opening & Closing Rates in Bombay Market per unit**

Name of the commodity	On 20-12-39	On 20-4-40	On 13-6-40	% decline in 6 months
Ground-nut.	Rs 44-2-0	Rs 38-13-0	Rs 34-2-0	29%
	Rs 43-8-0	Rs 38-14-0	Rs 34-8-0	"
Ground-nut oil				
Cake (expellas)	Rs 57-0-0	Rs 46-0-0	Rs 29-0-0	49%
Linseed	Rs 9-10-3	Rs 7-4-9	Rs 6-1-0	
	Rs 9-7-6	Rs 7-3-6	Rs 6-1-3	37%
	Rs 4-9-3	Rs 4-1-3	Rs 3-12-0	

Name of the commodity	On 20-12-39	On 20-4-40	On 13-6-40	% decline in 6 months
Wheat	Rs 4-7-6	Rs 4-0-3	-----	17%
Cotton Broach	Rs 280-8 0		Rs 168-4-0	40%
	Rs (on 6 12-39)			
Cotton Seed	Rs 28-5-0	Rs 25-11-0	Rs 24-12-0	9 5%
	Rs 29-4-0	Rs 25-8 0	Rs 24-14-6	
Jute	Rs 88 0-0		Rs 65-0-0	26%

## The Coming Agrarian Crisis

The agrarian crisis that is imminent will be far more devastating than the one of 1932-34. Its political and social effects will be more far reaching. This crisis is taking place in the period of the second imperialist war and is caused by it. The reasons why it would be intense are as follows —

- (a) The Kisan is so completely denuded of his savings in the last crisis that he has far less stamina to withstand a fresh price-crisis.
- (b) This crisis will be accompanied by a RISE in the prices of Industrial goods he needs and it would mean greater load.
- (c) The drive for war-loan war recruitment and the war generally would enable the kisan to link up the crisis not with a natural calamity but with WAR imposed upon him by the foreign Government.
- (d) The collapse of the prestige of the Government, in view of the defeats it is sustaining in the war would embolden the kisan to revolutionary action.

## Political Effects

It is on the agrarian front that the British imperialist structure would crack up under the rapidly increasing political and economic strains and stresses of the war. The impending agrarian crisis would be a decisive factor in determining the political development in our country. The approach of this crisis and the probable storm it would bring in its trail may be a powerful factor in forcing imperialism to make the few concessions which the national bourgeoisie is

demanding for a settlement. Imperialism would certainly want the "national ministries" to face the agrarian storm and save a situation which might easily develop into a revolutionary crisis. If "National Ministries" came into being after "a settlement" they would be tools of imperialist policy. They would not be able to change an iota of the policy which led to the crisis. The inevitable logic of their treacherous policy of compromise would drive them to use the only means of allaying the storm namely bullets against the kisan masses. Thus counter-revolution, complete disruption of the national movement rank reaction, such is the prospect which faces the nation in the event of a compromise, of a settlement. We have to wage a bitter struggle to prevent this disaster. We have to use every means of carrying on agitation among the congressmen, among the masses denouncing as traitors all those who talk of supporting the Allies, who talk of co-operating with the Government for Defence, who talk of forming national ministries. But the most important front on which we have to intensify our efforts in order to prevent a compromise or to smash it if comes earlier, is the kisan front. We have to forestall and prepare for the storm which is brewing on that front.

### **Our Agitational Slogans**

What must be our agitational slogan in the countryside ? First thing we must do is to warn the peasant against the terrific agrarian crisis that is ahead. This as we said would be far more terrible than the crisis of 1932-34. Since that time he has lost a lot of gold. Today he has nothing. The entire load of the fall of prices of money crops would fall upon his rickety shoulders. The merchant, the money lender won't suffer. They will get their commission and their interest. They would have to lock up less money in the stocks of agricultural commodities and the money thus set free they would invest in some other undertaking and earn all the same. It is the kisan who would suffer, under the load of taxes, high prices, rent and interest.

We have to explain that this crisis is coming as a result of the imperialist war. We have to explain that the British launched the



war to protect their empire. to perpetuate our slavery, exploitation and oppression. Now they are being beaten So they are looting everything they can from India, cheap raw materials and gold. to cover the gigantic cost of the war. They have caused this fall in prices. But the British imperialism is doomed This is its final crisis. But this oppressor of the Indian people would not die a natural death. The millions of kisans of India hand in hand with workers of the cities have to deal it the death blow And they will do it this time. They have learned to build their organisations as never before. They can influence the National Congress as never before. HENCE NO PANIC. The time is on our side but only if we prepare for the coming struggle head Kisan must wake up and organise in the kisan sabhas.

### **Main Demands**

What are the concrete demand we put forward and agitate for ?

1. Do not part with your gold or silver. Do not pay a single rupee to the WAR LOAN. No co-operation with War Committees which the collectors and the Sub-Divisional Officers are setting up everywhere Not a man for the Army.

2 Start agitation for the remission of rents and revenues. for total suspension of all dues and for moratorium for debts and interest. These slogans must be popularised now in accordance with the needs of the situation in the various localities. These slogans are preparatory to the partial struggles which will have to be launched as the crisis deepens and it becomes impossible for the kisans to pay their dues.

3. The slogan for the next step is "Hold the crop." On the basis of this slogan partial struggles of the kisan must be organised in localities. These struggles could be organised on the Gujerat Kisan Struggle model (Lavet, vide N.F.). Kisans declare their INABILITY to pay but secure the crop for themselves and not allow it to be confiscated.

4. The next step is of course organised *NO TAX AND NO RENT* struggle led by *PEASANT COMMITTEES* and *PEASANT GUARDS*

## **Specific Slogans for Provinces**

These are general slogans. In each province and district slogans will have to be worked out in accordance with the local conditions. For instance U.P. has worked out the following ones :—

1. Immediate introduction of Arrears of Rent Bill passed by the Congress Ministry;
2. Immediate introduction of Agricultural Indebtedness Act on the lines of the Congress Bill;
3. Reduction of Rents;
4. No special war levies, No war loans. No co-operation with War Committees. No man for the Army;
5. No Zamindar or Police Zulm.

In Bengal apart from the general slogans there is the specific issue of the Permanent Settlement system which has been brought forward by the recently published report of the Floud Commission. There is also the question of the new Jute *restriction* ordinance which has fixed not only the minimum but also the maximum price of Jute and the question of the fall of the price of Jute.

## **To the Kisan Masses**

It is urgently necessary that all provincial units immediately take stock of the work done on the kisan front and of the situation there, work out agitational slogans on the line indicated above. The aim is to intensify work on that front, to send new cadres to it and with instruction to dig themselves in the rural areas before the agrarian crisis actually breaks out. In most of the provinces the main difficulty would be paucity of cadres because of the unending series of arrest of all our open cadres. The underground comrades would have to run short intensive training school for the new cadres selected to work on the kisan front. These will have to be selected from the second rank comrades already working on that front. This course should consist of following points :—

- (1) The basic slogans of the All-India Kisan Sabha programme. Their relation to the programme of National democratic revolution;

- (2) War and our tasks, war and the kisans—the slogans to be put across now.
- (3) Instructions on the special methods of organisation and agitation to be used under the present conditions.
- (4) Struggle for partial demands How to win over Congress workers for kisan work and the struggle

### **Outline Plan of Kisan Work**

It is impossible to lay down a detailed plan of kisan work in this circular. Certain general guiding lines may be indicated. They are as follows:—

(a) All OPEN agitation, against war, against recruitment and even against loan has to be avoided when you begin work in a rural area. All such agitation must be conducted through whisper campaigns, and in closed door group meetings. It must be explained to the kisans why we conduct the agitation in this manner not out of fear but out of necessity to preserve our fighting force.

(b) Aim of our agitation is not to spread panic among kisans, but to *CREATE FEARLESSNESS* and self-confidence. Hammer home with every bit of war news the weakness, imbecility, cowardice and complete bankruptcy of the British ruling class.

(c) Do not run away with the idea that now everything is to be done secretly and underground. This is a most dangerous illusion. It would kill all mass work. The fight for partial demands is to be conducted openly, open meetings demanding remission, protesting against the Police Zulum, mass petitions to authorities, all these things must go on, no they must increase. There is no open anti-war propaganda in them. But there is a steady putting across of the Congress resolution in our way, Demand for freedom, for Constituent Assembly, for National Struggle. Learn to combine this legal work with a barrage of underground propaganda and agitation. This alone would increase the fearlessness among the peasants and will enable them to see the need for illegal work and teach them to protect underground workers and spread illegal literature.

(d) In every kisan centre pick out and train up young kisan cadres as prospective party members. establish auxiliary party units in connection with doing the underground work of arranging closed door meetings, keeping watch over spies and lick-spittles of Patwari (Patil) and Zamindars, circulating illegal leaflets and so on. Establish a kisan committee of influential and fearless kisans and a nucleus of PARTISANS of the Party in every centre of kisan work.

(e) While doing kisan work, our comrades must pay the greatest attention to Congress workers, to leading cadres of the District and Taluka Congress committees. The continued stalemate, the policy of Gandhiji and the Working Committee of sliding back to the position "No Struggle During War Time" has bewildered large sections of leading cadres in the countryside. This bewilderment and confusion is leading to demoralisation. The Congress workers, especially drawn from the class of poor and middle peasants and petty shop-keepers do not understand this policy of surrender, but they see no other way and get demoralised. The constructive work of the Gandhian type they do and enrol passive or active satyagrahis but there is no heart in it. We must approach this section and try to win over the best among them for the kisan work. We must win them over for the constructive work among the kisans, the constructive work of the new type. We must impress "upon them that national struggle must come and that the kisan has to play a great part in it. Our job as Congressmen is to stand by the side of the kisan as the war crisis deepens, organise his partial struggles and organise the kisans through them, implement the Congress policy of non-cooperation with war, see that peasants and villagers have nothing to do with war loan, war committees, and recruitment. This is how we must build the strength of the people for the great struggle ahead. This is how we would make surrender and betrayal on the part of leaders impossible. If we make such an approach to the Congress cadres we would win the best of them for cooperation with us. This practical work will save them from demoralisation and make them our allies in the struggle against the compromisers.

Discuss this circular in your P C and in your extended kisan fraction and work out on this basis a provincial kisan circular and a plan of work. Send us a copy of it and send your criticism of these suggestions

Polit Bureau  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
Communist Party of India  
25th June 1947

## MAY DAY MANIFESTO 1940

### OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Brothers.

This year's May Day dawns amidst the world-wide slaughter of another imperialist war. Once again the capitalist masters of the world have plunged humanity into another blood-bath in order that their profits may rise, in order that they may settle their quarrel over the division of the world. Once again the worker and the peasant in the countries at war are being forced into uniform and are taken to the shambles. Once again it is a fight for "democracy", for the "defence and self-determination of small nations". Once again we, the enslaved Indian people, are called upon to bear the burdens of this "war for Democracy"—while democracy is trampled underfoot in our country and the brutal law of lathi and war ordinance reigns supreme.

#### A Warning Unheeded

It was twelve months ago, on the last May Day, that the X Communist International warned the working class against the coming catastrophe in unmistakable terms. "Begun by the fascist aggressor states", declared Comrade Dimitrov, "the new imperialist war which has flared up with the down-right toleration of the reactionary bourgeoisie of Britain and France threatens to become transformed into a general world war." It was the Comintern and its parties alone which were strenuously fighting to unite the toilers and the peoples of the world together with the Soviet Union against fascist aggression and against the policy of the ruling circles of the British and French bourgeoisie who for their own ends were tolerating this brigandage on a world scale. The Communists persistently pointed out that if the democratic people of England, France and other capitalist countries could defeat their pro-fascist rulers and

secure a real peace front with the Soviet Union. fascist aggression could be checked and the danger of war averted

### **Who helped war makers ?**

Why did this unity not come about ? Why did we not succeed in smashing the plans of the fascist incendiaries of war ? Why did we fail to defeat the conspiracies of the imperialist instigators of war ? Why was the powerful unity of the toilers and the peoples of the capitalist countries with the Soviet Union not achieved ?

Because there were splitters of unity in the ranks of the working class itself. It was the disruptive policy of the Social-Democratic and Labour Parties, the policy of capitulation to the bourgeoisie, of splitting the working class, of slandering the Communists and the Soviet Union, which has led to this terrible setback. The leaders of these parties refused to join hands with the Communists in waging an uncompromising fight against the reactionary war-mongering policy of Chamberlain and Daladier which led to the disastrous deal of Munich. They refused to join hands with the Communists in fighting Munich, in defending the Spanish people, in giving consistent support to the peace efforts of the Soviet Union. In its Manifesto on the last May Day, the Communist International warned the working class against this treacherous policy and called upon the socialist workers to "break the resistance of their leaders to united action of the working class and strengthen unity together with their class brothers the Communists."

### **"Socialist" Splitters of the Working Class**

This was not achieved. The leadership of the Second International deliberately sabotaged every attempt at united action. They refused the last-minute call of the Communist International for a world conference of labour organisations to forge immediate unity to prevent the impending disaster. Once again the reactionary leadership of the Socialist and Labour Parties betrayed the cause of the working class as in the last war and brought about a situation in which the working class stood divided in the face of another imperialist war. This contemptible gang has now openly joined the camp of the imperialist war-makers. It is the loudest in support of the policy of continuing and spreading the war. It is they who take the lead in black-guarding the Soviet, in acting as the pace-makers

of anti-Soviet war. It is they who are inciting the imperialists (if that were at all needed!) in their brutal repressive campaign against Communists, against all the heroic fighters against imperialist war. It is they who have abetted the barbarous suppression of the French Communist Party and encouraged the unheard of crimes of Daladier against the French working class. And finally, let us not forget that it is these self-same gentlemen who give us, the Indian people, the unsolicited advice that we give up our struggle for independence, that we surrender to imperialism and aid in its predatory war, while they have not a word to say against the brutal ordinance regime which has been clamped on us. They have sold their "own" working class to the Imperialists and now they are busily gilding the chains of slavery which bind the colonial people too

### **Greet Heroic Fighters Against War**

Undaunted by imperialist terror, unmoved by the treachery of the Socialist and Labour leaders, the Communist Parties in every country are in the fore-front, patiently mobilising the resistance of the toiling masses to the burdens of war, exposing the imperialist nature of the war, winning the toilers and the people in every country for the revolutionary fight to put an end to this war and with it to the rule of the imperialist and fascist war-makers. In every country today it is the Communists who are bearing the brunt of brutal ruling-class terror. In France, in Czechoslovakia, in Germany, in Scandinavia and in India, it is the Communists who are the victims of martial law tribunals, and of war-emergency laws.

On this May Day, we pay our homage to the hundreds of proletarian anti-war fighters in all countries who have been done to death by the imperialist friends. We send our revolutionary greetings to the thousands of brave men and women, who have been imprisoned in India and in other countries because they dared to mobilise the people for the fight against war, for the fight for freedom. Their cause is the invincible cause of the toiling millions of every land. Their cause is the invincible cause of the freedom and happiness of world humanity.

On this May Day, we shall raise our defiant voice in mighty demonstrations, against this world-wide repression of the Communists, and especially against the brutal ordinance regime in



our own country, which has already taken toll of hundreds of our best anti-imperialist fighters

### **Hail Soviet Union—Liberator of Peoples**

On this May Day, we greet the Socialist Soviet Union and the victorious Red Army which has effectively intervened in the war from the very start. It has not only guaranteed its own security but has so far secured peace for its neighbours, by liberating the peoples of Eastern Poland and by defeating the war-mongers' conspiracy in Finland. The imperialists are gnashing their teeth at the fiasco in which their plans to make Germany fight the Soviet have ended. They are now making new plans, and hatching new conspiracies to launch a war against the Soviet Union. They are trying to draw the Muslim peoples of the Middle and Near East into their nefarious designs. But the oppressed peoples of the East, whether Arabs, Persians, Indians or Chinese, know by their own experience of the last 20 years who is their friend and who is their foe. They know that the Socialist Soviet Union is the inveterate foe of imperialism and the helper and liberator of the oppressed peoples. They know the part it has played in the anti-imperialist struggle of the Chinese people, in the liberation of the Asiatic races within the Soviet Union itself.

On this May Day, we proclaim our support to the Soviet Union and the Red Army which is the living guarantee of the success of the revolutions that are ahead. We condemn and oppose all conspiracies of British Imperialism to turn the war against the Soviet Union.

### **The First International Blow Against War**

On this historic May Day, the demonstrations throughout the world will be a stern warning to the imperialist and fascist war-makers and their socialist lackeys. The working class in the capitalist countries will yet heal the breach in their ranks, will yet join their forces with the maturing revolutionary struggles in the oppressed colonial countries and with the Soviet people. The slogan issued by the Communist International at the outbreak of the war— *THE WORKING CLASS IS DETERMINED TO PUT AN END TO THIS WAR AFTER ITS OWN FASHION*—will ring out from every May Day platform throughout the world. The toiling masses and the oppressed peoples

will demonstrate their determination to smash the efforts of the imperialists to spread the war, to direct against the Soviet Union. They will demonstrate their determination to convert imperialist war into a series of proletarian revolutions in capitalist countries. to wars of national liberation in colonial countries. *THE CLASHES AND THE STREET BATTLES ON THIS MAY DAY WILL BE THE FIRST SKIRMISHES HERALDING THE GREAT WORLD-WIDE BATTLE THAT IS AHEAD*

### **Our Part in India**

In that battle the Indian working class has a decisive part to play. Tremendous have been the fights that the Indian working class have waged during the last eight months. Strike struggles, both political and economic, more gigantic and powerful than waged by the working class of any other country since the outbreak of war, have brought the Indian working class to the very forefront of the world working-class movement. Fire has been concentrated against it. Its Party, the Communist Party of India, has borne the main brunt of imperialist attack. But far greater are the ordeals that lie ahead, far more heroic and decisive the role that it has yet to play. Faced with the historic task of smashing British Imperialism, the main enemy of humanity, the chief war-incendiary, the pillar of world reaction and the arch-instigator of counter revolutionary war against the Soviet, the national movement under the cowardly Gandhian leadership stands paralysed while imperialism rains blow on the vanguard and the masses groan under war-burdens. The glorious heritage of the Congress, its fighting unity built by decades of sacrifice, the honour of the national tri-colour sanctified by the blood of martyrs, stand menaced. The national army stands in danger of defeat even before the battle has begun.

### **Fight Against Repression and War Burdens**

From this calamity the proletariat has to save the national movement. It has to save the heritage of the Congress, its fighting unity, its honour, the honour of the national tri-colour.

The whole country has to be engulfed in a wave of war-allowance strikes. The message of mass action against war-burdens and war-levees has to be carried to kisans in every village, in every hamlet. Fighting unity has to be forged with students, whose movement.

imperialism is striving to suppress. The nation has to be won for the policy of mass struggle. for mass civil disobedience movement. for political general strike. for country-wide no-rent actions.

Such are the tasks that May Day summons the Indian working class to fulfil.

*DOWN WITH IMPERIALIST WAR!*

*FORWARD TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, TO THE CAPTURE  
OF POWER!*

*DOWN WITH ORDINANCE RAJ!*

*FORWARD TO A DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND PEOPLE'S  
IRAJ!*

*DOWN WITH LANDLORDISM AND DEBT SLAVERY!*

*FOR EIGHT-HOUR DAY AND LIVING WAGE!*

*LONG LIVE THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GLORIOUS RED  
IRAJ!*

Let these slogans ring out from every part of the country on May Day. Let the vision of free and happy India, the glorious vision which has inspired thousands of our countrymen to lay down their lives, likewise inspire every Indian, every Congressman, on the eve of the coming final battle. Let the determination to do or die steel every heart for the ordeals that lie ahead. Let the Indian proletariat imbue the entire nation with this spirit, the spirit of fulfilling the great task which history has to-day assigned to our people: the task of achieving the overthrow of British Imperialism, the pillar of world reaction and the arch-incendiary of world war.

*LONG LIVE MAY DAY THE MILITANT DAY OF INTERNATIONAL  
PROLETARIAN SOLIDARITY!*

*DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALIST WAR!*

*DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM!*

*LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL!*

## ON THE STRIKE STRATEGY IN THE PRESENT PERIOD

1. With the outbreak of the second imperialist war, the strike struggle of the Indian working class assumes a new significance for the toiling masses and for the Indian people as a whole. It is working class which has stepped forward as the first to register its mass protest against imperialist war, and to resist the war-burden which imperialism is throwing on the Indian people. The anti-war strike of 2nd October in Bombay, the one-day strike of workers all over India on the Independence day (Cawnpore-Dehri), and the wave of war-allowance strikes which began with the Jute workers strike (Nov. 1939) and has culminated in the Bombay Textile strike, The Municipal workers strike of Calcutta and the coal-miners strike at Jharia.—These tremendous actions indicate that the Indian working class is well on the way to attaining that maturity, and political consciousness and organisation which would enable it to play its historic role of “the vanguard of the majority of the people” in the coming national struggle.

2. Lenin taught us “the primary importance” of mass political strikes in the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. He showed the tremendous revolutionary significance of the wave of workers' political strikes which stirred Czarist Russia in the year 1905. It is “a new and an important weapon hitherto unknown in the practice of the Marxist parties and one that has subsequently gained recognition.” [History of the C. P. S. U. (B), p.71]. Mass political strikes are of great importance in the beginning of a revolutionary period. They enable the working class to *rouse* and mobilise the toiling masses and the people to action against the main enemy. This was the role which the political strikes played in the early period of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. They “stirred up the whole country.” They became a prelude to the wave of mass

peasant and soldier revolts which were to follow. India is entering into a revolutionary period Indian working class is taking its first lessons in wielding this weapon. The role which political mass strikes have to play in India in paving the way for the coming Nation-wide struggle and later on in raising it to the level of a mass revolutionary struggle has been explained in the "Proletarian Path". Their "great importance at the beginning and in the process of the insurrection" (Lenin) has been shown there in the context of the revolutionary developments as we visualise them in our own country in the present period

Here we are in the main concerned in bringing out firstly the political significance of the wave of war-allowance strikes, which is sweeping the country at present; and secondly in briefly outlining the strategy we have to adopt and the preparations we have to make to face the imperialist repression against these strikes

3. The working class is the first to put forward active mass resistance to the lowering of the standard of living which war mongering imperialism imposes upon the people. The vast mass peasants in villages and the employees in the cities—all suffer from the rise of prices which war brings about. But it is the working class which shows the way to hit out and resist this onslaught. Working class thus wins the admiration of the toiling masses, the peasantry and the employees in the city. The heroic struggle of the working class against the common enemy against common worsening conditions inspire the peasantry and the toiling masses to action. The wave of war allowance strikes spreading with rapidity over the country and fought with tenacity and vigour in the face of imperialist and police repression opens great revolutionary possibilities. They infect the poverty stricken peasant masses already suffering under war burdens with the spirit of revolt. They open the possibility of hastening the advent of the National struggle of raising it to a revolutionary plane.

4. Here again we may draw upon the lessons of the revolutionary struggle of the Russian working class. The revolutionary strikes of the Russian working class against the war-burdens of 1904-5 period (Russo-Japanese war) became the prelude to the revolutionary rising of the people against Czarism which followed. Lenin summed up the significance of these strike struggles in the following words:—

5. "The broad masses of the Russian exploited could not have

been drawn into the revolutionary movement had they not seen examples of how the wage workers in various branches of industry compelled the capitalists to improve their conditions. The struggle imbued the masses of Russian people with a new spirit. Only then did the old serf-ridden, backward, patriarchal, pious and obedient Russia cast off the old Adam, only then did the Russian people obtain a democratic and really revolutionary education." (quoted in National Front Vol. II No. 35. See article Mahagai Conference).

6. It is this great political significance of the war-allowance strikes, which determines the attitude of imperialism towards it. Similarly our strategy in this strike struggle is also determined by the importance of this strike struggle for bringing the proletariat forward as a decisive force in the coming national struggle. What is the attitude of imperialism towards the strike wave? In the beginning imperialism wanted to forestall the strike wave by hastening to settle the first strikes by giving small wage increases. When in November and December 1939 the rise in food prices was somewhere between 25 and 33% the Government and the employers were trying to check the spread of the war-allowance strikes by granting wage increases somewhere between 7 and 15%. Jute lords who were the first to profit by the war and who had received colossal Government orders for sand bags paid 10% increase to settle the Jute strike of November 1939. The Cawnpore employers paid 6 pice to 2 annas in the Rupee in January to all Textile workers. Dalmia paid 18% war bonus on the scale of wages current before 1st November 1939 (Dehri strike). In Bombay the Labour Commissioner was settling a number of strikes in small industries by granting a flat rise of 2 annas in the Rupee war-allowance. This for a time created the impression that war-allowance strikes would win easy victories. There was a danger of launching strikes without proper preparations. But very soon it became clear that the Government was fully conscious of the political implications of successful strikes in the war period. It would not like strikes to take place and for that reason would even bring pressure on owners to make some concessions (as in Cawnpore and in the case of minor industries in Bombay). But once strike takes place in well organised industries—and workers launch struggle to win *adequate* wage increase, its whole effort is to crush them. Because it does not want genuine working class organisations to grow and become strong—

as they would inevitably do so through successful strikes. The Government realises that if in one centre or one industry a big strike succeeds it will affect other centres, and industries and a wave of mass strikes will sweep over the country. That development taking place in a period like this and on the eve of national struggle has most dangerous revolutionary possibilities. That is why the Government once strike breaks out, would do everything in its power to crush it and would adopt measures far more repressive than any it adopted in the past.

The Bombay strike is a pointer. Processions, meetings except in a few maidans, mass picketing, even shouting of slogans and singing of songs, have been made impossible. Strike leaders are arrested and interned under the Defence of India Act. Despite the fact that the strike developed peacefully. Scores of workers and militants are being arrested every day. Police resort to indiscriminate beatings. No press dares to print strike handbills. Propaganda by motor lorries and loudspeakers is banned. In brief all the methods by which the strike is ordinarily maintained and intensified are banned.

This indicates what we have to face in this period.

7. In the face of this attitude of the owners and of imperialism, what should be strike strategy that the working class has to adopt? Imperialism knows that in the majority of cases the war-allowance strikes and agitation is lead by the Communists. The more the strikes succeed in gaining *adequate* wage increase, the more they spread. The political consciousness of the working class, their organisational strength grows. Communist party becomes stronger. The possibility of the working class acting as a decisive force in the coming National struggle through political strikes grows. Its capacity to do so increases. That is why imperialism is determined to crush the strike wave in isolation. It is determined to take the opportunity of these strikes to round up the Communists and imprison all their militant working class supporters. This is the real meaning of the drive against the Communists, of the extensive use of the Defence of India Act against them.

Does this mean that we should avoid a contest with the repressive forces of the police and imperialism now? Should we accept the wage rise they give and *consolidate* our forces now so that we would be able to act at the time when the National struggle is

launched? No, this would not be the correct proletarian policy. The wage increase which is being offered is entirely inadequate and it is the job of the proletarian party to lead the workers in their fight for not only defending their standard of living but for bettering it. These economic struggles in this revolutionary period are in the nature of vanguard actions. They will have to be carefully prepared for these, anticipating the brutal and ruthless police repression which will be hurled against it. Unless the working class is able to pass on to the offensive, unless it is able to fight back and defeat the strike-breaking attacks of the police, it can neither gain its demands nor can it play its role as "the vanguard of the majority of the people". In other words, if the war-allowance strikes have to succeed as economic strikes and if they have to act as the unleasher of people's struggles, raising the political consciousness of the working class and steeling it for playing its role in the National struggles ahead, then they must develop into successful mass battles against police repression. The illusion that war-allowance strikes, would succeed merely through peaceful demonstration of mass strength must be given up. The mere ability to bring about a stoppage of work and to hold on for some time is not enough. Imperialism is going to use the whole machinery of war time repressions to break it. *NOT TO BE PREPARED TO DEFEND THE STRIKE AND WIN IT IN THE TEETH OF POLICE REPRESSION IS NOT ONLY TO LOSE THE STRIKE BUT TO EXPOSE THE PARTY TO THE DANGER OF BEING COMPLETELY WIPED OUT.* On the other hand, not to launch the strike at all, to accept the wage rise offered, to defend inaction, to sabotage real preparations for strike by the slogan—"strengthen organisation first and then fight"—would be sheer economism. It would be repudiation of the defence of the interests of the working class. It would be the denial of the political significance of the war-allowance strikes, the denial of their role as vanguard actions for the unleashing of National struggle.

8 These considerations enable us to lay down the main guiding lines for the strike strategy during this period. (a) We may accept temporarily inadequate wage increases, in places where we are weak and where the preparations for fighting out a successful strike are not complete. But it must be realised that it is only a respite for preparation. For the struggle is postponed—not avoided altogether. (b) Our preparations for launching war-allowance strikes



must ensure (1) the preservation and continuity of party leadership (2) that the units of the party function as the real leaders and organisers of militant rank and file mill and locality committees (3) that they secure the widest mobilisation and activity of the masses in the fight against the police. (c) War-allowance strikes will have to be developed into mass clashes with the police. Police repression, bans, strike-breaking, terrorisations will have to be defeated by defiant mass actions.

9. Experience of the strike struggle for the last ten years shows that the first blow of imperialism against a mass strike is always aimed at the party. It was so in 1929, in 1934 and so it is to-day in 1940. Our first job while preparing for the strike is to make perfect arrangement for the underground FUNCTIONING of the party centre. This has to be achieved by a minimum number of leading Comrades going underground. Perfect technical arrangements must be made for the U.G. Party centre to be in direct touch with the cells, to be able to move them and guide them daily. The U.G. Party centre must be in a position to guide the open mass leadership of the Party in the Union. Technical arrangements for the meeting of the whole party committee and fraction—requiring the presence of open as well as U.G. comrades must be there. Technical arrangements for the printing of posters, handbills must be there. Experience of Bombay should be a lesson. In Bombay the great war allowance strike was launched without these preparations being made. The result was that the sudden arrest of leadership for a time completely paralysed the party machinery. There was no U.G. centre. No arrangements for U.G. functioning of Party leadership—No arrangement whatsoever for illegal printing. All this had to be made after the first blows were already struck at the Party leadership.

10. BEFORE the strike is launched the Party as a whole must be made ready for action. It must be placed on a war footing. Each party unit in the strike locality has to become the leader and organiser of all the militant workers in the mills in that locality. The job of the party units is to organise these militants into chawl and mohalla committees—to make arrangements for picketing in chawls—to organise a workers volunteer corps in each locality. All these preparations have to be made *before* the strike actually begins. The party unit in each locality must build round it an auxiliary

group consisting of the most active and politically conscious militants. These picked men must be given short intensive political training as prospective party members. These men must be picked for their initiative in organising and leading chawl committees, for organising picketing and volunteer corps. Our local Technical cadre, for the distribution of illegal leaflets, posters, for organisation of information service, for the making of bandobast of blacklegs—must also be drawn from them. Thus the party unit in each locality must be directly linked to the masses—must act as the live wire—through the help of this auxiliary group of these militants. There is no question of our being able to raise the tempo of the strike, of our fighting police repression, of our politicalising the strike—unless we have ensured the leading role of the PARTY or as a functioning organisation in the leadership of the strike. Party centre—party cell—militant auxiliary group—chawl committees, volunteer units—masses.—This functioning chain must be established before the strike is launched. The strikes in the present period, when they have to be fought in the face of police repression, when they have to play the political role as vanguard actions cannot be fought in the old way. A handful of Union leaders—leading obedient and passive workers, and the tempo of the strike kept up through mass meetings and through actions against *BLACKLEGS* arranged through ‘contacts’ known to leaders.—This pattern of conducting the strike cannot serve the purpose to-day. Police repression cannot be fought without organised mass actions—without rank and file initiative—without the organised militant committees in mills and chawls lead by the party units. In other words unless party machinery is able to act as the motor of the rank and file strike organisation, there is no question of winning the strike—of defeating police repression of strengthening the Party, and of preparing the proletariat for future political actions.

11. Rank and file participation in the Central as well as in the local leading organs of the strike is the ABC of the revolutionary strike strategy. Reformists run the strike through a bureaucratic union leadership. They do not create organs of rank and file leadership. They are not interested in calling forth the revolutionary activity and the initiative of the working class masses. In the period when we were fighting the reformist leadership and fighting for the unity of the Trade Union movement we laid the greatest stress on

rank and file leadership. It was because of our initiative to evolve rank and file leadership in the Bombay Textile general strike of 1934 that we succeeded in counteracting the influence of the reformists. In spite of the severe repression which our party faced in that strike, in spite of the failure of the strike, we succeeded within one year in driving the reformist from the field of Textile labour. The rank and file heroism which we developed and displayed in the 1934 strike won for us the admiration and the support of the majority of the working class. But our mistake then was that we failed to preserve the leadership and the continuity of the Party. We failed to function the Party as an organisation leading and guiding the rank and file organs of strike leadership. The result was we were unable to take advantage of the swing of the working class towards our party. We were unable to build the Party. This time on the eve of the present strike our party had once again rebuilt the old G.K.U. of 1928-29 days. The Union enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the Textile workers. The strike was almost complete on the very first day at the call of the Union. This easy success made us neglect the task of building the rank and file organs of strike leadership. There was no Central strike committee with rank and file representatives from the mills. The local organs of chawl committees were built up during the strike and not before the strike. There was no well organised volunteer corp in the localities. The result of this lacunae became at once visible as soon as the arrest of leaders and police repression began. We began correcting our error when we found that we could not organise effective resistance to the growing repression of the police. Enlargement of the managing committee of the Union through the co-option of the elected rank and file representatives of the various mills, the organisation of chawl committees and of volunteer units was taken in hand. There was an immediate improvement in the capacity of the strikers to resist police repression. The lesson we have to learn from this experience of the Bombay strike is this:—

Rank and file organs of strike leadership, central as well as in the localities have to be brought into existence right from the very beginning of the strike. Failure to do this is to repudiate the struggle against police repression, is to lapse back into reformist bureaucratic ways of conducting the strike, is to betray the cause of the workers.

*RANK AND FILE LEADERSHIP ALONE ENABLE YOU TO SECURE THE WIDEST MOBILISATION AND THE ACTIVITY OF THE MASSES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION.*

12. Such are the preparatory steps we have to take in order to make a revolutionary strategy in the war-allowance strikes possible. That strategy is the strategy of offensive—of not bending before police repression, but of hitting back, of rendering inoperative the police bans on meetings and processions or of breaking them. But bans cannot be successfully broken, police—the strike-breaker No. 1 cannot be defeated by a handful of militant workers. That would not save the strike. That would mean the vanguard being wiped out. Masses of workers have to actively defy the police. But that is not possible unless we have created a rank and file leadership of the strike—a rank and file organisation of the militants. That is not possible unless we have a functioning party machinery to guide this leadership and this organisation. That is not possible unless we prepare for the strike by an intense POLITICAL agitation—showing the relation of the strike with the fight against imperialist war and with the impending struggle for National freedom. That is not possible unless we raise the tempo of the masses through our speeches, our entire agitation, our handbills and posters and bring home to them the fact that strike cannot be won without the masses storming at the police restrictions—without fighting back police repression. The essential feature of our strike strategy in this period is that war-allowance strikes in this revolutionary period cannot be won by passive withholding of work. What is essential is organisational and political preparation of the working class to enable it to make mass assault against the strike-breaking repression of the Government and the police. Failure or inability to develop successful offensive against the repressive attack of imperialism would mean 'a wipe out' for the party, would condemn it political impotence in the coming period of National struggle.

Rapid development of mass offensive against the police bans, restriction is the only line of defence open for the working class in the present period of strike struggle. That is the line of defending its own interests and of coming forward as the vanguard of the people fighting back war-burden—fighting back police repression. That is the line which would enable the Indian working class to play its political role in the coming National struggle.

13. To a far greater extent than before, popular support and sympathy is needed for the victory of the strikes. Agitation both before and during the strike among non-proletarian masses, among Congressmen must be carried most intensively. Significance of strikes political as well as economic in the new period must be explained to the Congress masses and their active support and sympathy won. Congress committees must be made to organise meetings and demonstrations in support of the workers demands. Really sympathetic Congressmen should be made to speak in strike meetings, etc. The need for Congress to win working class support in view of impending struggle, the tremendous effectiveness of the weapon of political strikes, the danger of Congress waiting and watching while workers struggles are crushed—all these points must be popularly and convincingly explained.

These are the salient features of the strike strategy in the present period. War-allowance strikes and industrial strikes generally have assumed a tremendous significance and political impotence. To fight them successfully, to defeat police efforts to crush them—to pass to an aggressive strike strategy—for the realisation of its basic demands.—These are the tasks which the proletariat has to fulfil in order that it becomes a force—in order that it is able to play its historic role in the impending National struggle.

## WAR AND OUR TASKS

### I. International

1. *Imperialist Character of War* : Like the War of 1914-1918, the present war is an Imperialist War. The main antagonism is the same as in the last war—the antagonism between British and German Imperialisms. The immediate issue of the conflict is also the same : mastery over the Balkans and Middle East. This is a war for colonies, for sources of raw materials, for European hegemony which is the key to world hegemony. This war is thus a direct continuation of the conflict that led to the last war and developed, though at first in a subdued form, throughout the post-war period.

2. *The New Background* : This war, however, is taking place in an entirely different background.

(a) The last war ended with the defeat of German Imperialism. But a year before that, an event of world historic importance had taken place—the victory of proletarian revolution in Russia. That event marked the beginning of a new phase in the world history. From that date, confronting each other, stood two worlds : the world of Socialism and the world of Capitalism. The conflict between these two worlds became the basic conflict. The very existence of the Soviet Union, its increasing might and prosperity in the midst of the Capitalist world which entered into a phase of chronic crisis at the end of the last war, exercised profound revolutionary influence over the working class movements in capitalist countries and over the colonial revolutionary movements. It sharpened and intensified the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in every country, between the imperialist powers and the colonies. Therefore, the destruction of the Soviet Union became the chief aim of the world bourgeoisie at whose head stood British Imperialism. The central conflict that determined the whole history

of the years between 1918 and 1939, was this conflict between the Soviet Union heading the world revolutionary forces and British Imperialism heading the forces of world reaction.

(b) It was because of this conflict that German Imperialism was able to re-emerge as a world military power. It was because of this conflict that Britain armed Hitler, sacrificed one country after another and retreated before Fascist advance, rejected the plan for collective security, destroyed the League of Nations. It was because of this conflict that Britain persistently intrigued for and incited a war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union hoped for the mutual weakening of both the powers and for the consolidation of her own hegemony over Europe. But German Imperialism recognising the political and military might of the Soviet Union dared not move against it. It had to enter into Pact with the Soviet Union, which it had sworn to destroy thereby breaking the Anti-Comintern Axis to bits. The Soviet-German Pact smashed British plans. The pact completely altered the balance of power and threatened British hegemony of Europe with utter destruction. It was the biggest defeat that British diplomacy had ever suffered. It was against this Pact that Britain launched the present war. It is in order to undo this pact, to eliminate Germany as an imperialist rival, to eliminate the menace of German advance into the Balkans and Middle East and to recover hegemony of Europe that Britain went to war with Germany.

(c) This war is taking place in the midst of the chronic crisis into which the capitalist world entered at the end of the last war. This war is taking place in the midst of a world revolutionary movement, immeasurably stronger and more developed than in 1914-1918. The national movements in the colonies and the revolutionary working class movements in the capitalist countries are both immensely stronger today. This war is taking place when the Communist International with its sections in every major country has become a tremendously powerful revolutionary force. This war is taking place in the midst of a world in which victorious Socialism confronts decadent Capitalism. All these factors determine the depth of the new revolutionary crisis into which the world has entered with the outbreak of the war. They shape the course of the war. They determine the fate of world capitalism itself.

3. *Leninist strategy of Communist Parties* : The conflict between

Socialism and Capitalism, between revolution and reaction, between freedom and slavery, the conflict that was the dominating feature of the last twenty years, is intensified a thousandfold by the outbreak of the war. This war being an Imperialist war, the Leninist strategy of transforming it into Civil War, is the only correct strategy. It is this strategy that is being worked out by the Communist Parties of all countries. In sharp opposition to all bourgeois parties and to Social Democratic Parties that counsel "Peace" with the war-mongering Governments and advocate the continuation of the war, the Communist Parties are calling upon the masses of Britain, Germany and France to overthrow their "own" Governments, to demand the termination of the war, to resist every attack on their political rights and standard of life. This is being prepared on the basis for the new round of world revolutions. In the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, the war has placed Socialist Revolution as the immediate task. The carrying out of the full programme of national democratic revolution has become the immediate and practical task in colonies.

4. *Victorious Socialism Intervenes : Britain the Main Aggressor* : The central and most powerful conflict, the conflict between the Soviet Union and British Imperialism that determined the history of the entire post-war period, continues to dominate the scene and decisively influence the course of this war. Victorious working class of the Soviet Union intervened in the war from the very start. It localised the war by the Soviet-German Pact and the pacts with Baltic States and thus checked its flames from spreading; it liberated the peoples of Byelo-Russia and Western Ukraine and blocked Hitler's way into the Balkans. It disarmed the Nazis and fundamentally altered the roles of the belligerent countries. Nazi Germany, realising that it could gain nothing by continuation of the war, began to seek peace. Britain, on the other hand, wants to continue the war in order to recover European hegemony which the Pact destroyed. It wants to continue the war in order to decimate the forces of working class revolution in Britain and France and establish in both countries under cover of war-measures, ruthless Fascist dictatorships. It wants to continue the war in order to destroy Germany as a rival power and replace her by a Germany that would be subservient to Britain and would pursue the policy of war against the Soviet Union.



More and more, this basic conflict, the clash between the world of Socialism and the world of Capitalism, the clash between the two opposing forces—the forces of Democracy, Peace and Socialism on the one hand and Imperialism, Fascism and War on the other, is coming to the forefront. The Soviet Union frustrated the plans of Britain by the Pact. It frustrated the plans of Nazi Germany by the march into Poland. Thus defeating both sets of war-mongers, the Soviet Union gave the call for peace. British Imperialism, which is today the main aggressor, however, does not want peace. Finding that hopes of clash between the Soviet Union and Germany did not materialise, the British rulers ought to create in Finland a base for war, a base for dominating the Baltic and effectively blockading Germany, a base for spreading the war in the Scandinavian countries, and above all a base for war of intervention against the Soviet Union. But firm and determined action by the Soviet Union nipped British plan in the bud. The Mannerheim regime, bolstered up by British Imperialism was forced to sue for peace. Soviet victory in Finland was a smashing blow at British Imperialism, the most severe defeat it has ever suffered.

5. *Britain's New Strategy* Spread the War : Maddened by these defeats, with everyone of its plans frustrated by the moves of the Soviet Union, British Imperialism is using the desperate means of spreading the war, to draw neutrals in by direct provocation, intensifying blockade in the North Sea etc. to involve the Muslim countries in the Middle East in a war with the Soviet Union, to light the conflagration in the Balkans and by all these measures, secure that preponderance in military power that would enable it to defeat and destroy both Germany and the Soviet Union. It is raising colossal sums for intensifying the war by attacking the standard of life of the people and especially the working class in Britain, by intensifying the exploitation of colonies. It is raising an army of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions in Britain itself. Thus, by spreading the war, by drawing in neutrals, by intensive exploitation of the people at home and the colonies abroad, by intensifying its war efforts, British Imperialism is striving to pass over *FROM THE PHASE OF STALEMATE TO THE PHASE OF OFFENSIVE*. In its desperate efforts to preserve its world domination, British Imperialism is striving to convert this war into a worldwide slaughter of an unprecedented magnitude.

**6. *International Significance of our struggle for Freedom :*** Such is the character of the present war. Such is the state to which it has reached at present. British Imperialism has declared India a belligerent country. Indian resources in men and money are being utilised for Britain's war of world domination. Entire Indian economy is being squeezed to serve Britain's plan for spreading the war. Democratic rights and civil liberties, freedom of press, speech and association are being suppressed in the interest of war-regimentation. The demand for self-determination, for independence and democracy put forward by the National Congress has been spurned by Imperialism. The humiliating offer has been made to the Indian national leaders to join the Viceregal Council and be parties to their predatory war, the war to consolidate Imperialist hold on India.

The attitude of the Indian people towards the war must be based on the clear recognition that this is an imperialist war in which British Imperialism is the chief war-monger. Indian people have everything to lose by participating in this war or by remaining neutral, which is the same thing under the present circumstances. They have everything to gain if they throw in their weight against the monstrous conspiracy of British Imperialism to spread this war, to convert it into an anti-Soviet war. The Indian people can play a decisive role in bringing this war to a speedy end, and in building a new world order in collaboration with the Soviet Union and international forces of the working class, if they launch a nationwide struggle against British Imperialism at this juncture. By utilising the present revolutionary crisis the Indian people will not only win their freedom but will deal a death blow to British Imperialism, the leader of world reaction. India's struggle for freedom at this juncture is thus of the greatest significance in the world revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism for the victory of socialism which history has placed on the order of the day.

## **II. National Political Tasks**

**1. *Two main features of the new Revolutionary period :*** The central task which faces the Indian people, its proletarian vanguard and the Party, in this period is the launching of a new round of national struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of British Imperialism and achievement of freedom. The nature and the depth of war crisis nationally as well as internationally makes

the realisation of this task a practical possibility. *OUR POLICY, STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THIS MUST BE GOVERNED BY THE clearest understanding of the revolutionary character of the present period* Two main features characterise the present period they are (1) *the all-round sharpening of the basic conflict of Indian life, the conflict between exploiting and the oppressive rule of British imperialism and its allies on the one hand and the political and economic interests of the entire Indian people on the other* (2) *rapid growth of the extensive mass actions of the toiling masses against the effects of war the rapid growth of the revolutionary political consciousness of the toiling masses and its vanguard the proletariat* It is these two new features of the present situation which in the main determine the new specific way in which we have to adapt and to carry forward our basic line of United National Front—the line of uniting the overwhelming majority of the people, with the National Congress as the main basis, of neutralising the influence of the bourgeoisie in the National Front, of isolating the compromisers, of progressively making the proletariat a decisive political force, of realising its hegemony in the National struggle.

8. *War sharpens the basic conflict : Imperialism vs Indian people* : Since the outbreak of the war, the British Government has tightened its political and economic stranglehold over India, in order to use India's resources for the war and to forestall the danger to it from the new wave of mass discontent and revolt. By its war amendments to the Constitution, it has made the Government at the Centre more autocratic. It has reduced Provincial Autonomy to a farce. It has promulgated war ordinances and the Defence of India Act over the head of the Provincial Governments, suppressed what civil liberties existed before, under the plea of "Defence of India". It has severely curtailed freedom of press, speech, person instituted a reign of repression and is seeking to make normal political life more and more impossible. In the economic field, British Imperialism is throwing its war-burden on to the shoulders of India. The raising of war funds, war loans, the increase in defence budget and in the

taxation, the manipulation through price control as well as through other means (Excess Profits Tax, Export Restrictions, Excise Duty on Sugar and on Petrol etc.) aimed at securing cheap raw material for export and at hindering the Indian industries from growing during the war period—these are some of the economic measures through which British Imperialism seeks to finance its war. *AS A RESULT OF THESE WAR MEASURES OF IMPERIALISM, THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND ALL SECTIONS OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE GROWS EVER SHARPER.* The bourgeoisie is discontented because it is unable to utilise the war boom to make profit by expanding Indian industries. The peasant gets ground down because he has to pay more for manufactured goods while he does not get a correspondingly increased price for his product. The worker and the employee has to face a fall in real wages and an all-round rise in prices. The people as a whole have to face curtailment of civil liberties. War sharpens a thousandfold, the exploitation, oppressions and humiliations which the Indian people ordinarily suffer under the British rule.

*9. New round of mass struggles : the revolutionary perspective of the period :* This growing attack by imperialism is resulting in the rising discontent of the masses in the spontaneous as well as organised struggles of workers and peasants against the economic effects of war, in the protest actions of workers and students against war and repression. The demand for a new round of national struggle against the British Government led by the Congress is growing among all the sections of the people. The main features of the mass actions with which the various sections of the people are resisting so far the imperialist attacks are : (1) the vanguard actions of workers against war, protest strikes (2nd October Strike in Bombay); (2) food riots by the Town poor in various places (as in December 1939); (3) the mighty wave of war-allowance strike which is sweeping the whole of the industrial working class in India; (4) the actions of the students against war and repression; (5) national demonstrations like the Independence Day being transformed into a countrywide protest action through workers' and students' strikes taking place in opposition to the instructions of national leadership. The peasants have not as yet begun to move on an extensive scale, but the discontent in the countryside is rising fast.

This rising tempo of the mass struggle opens the perspective of the most rapid mobilisation, embracing the widest strata of the people against the Government. *THIS OPENS THE PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE TAKING PLACE IN THE PERIOD OF WAR INTO A FULL-FLEDGED POPULAR RISING LEADING TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN A SINGLE LEAP*

It is this revolutionary perspective which determines the policy of imperialism towards the national leadership (bourgeois) and which in turn determines the policy of the national leadership towards the national struggle. It is this perspective which must also determine the main slogans and the strategy and tactics of the Proletariat and its Party.

10. *Policy of Imperialism in the period of war* · While British Imperialism driven by the war, pursues a policy of economic and political aggression against the Indian people including the bourgeoisie, it certainly wants to prevent a revolutionary upheaval in India, especially while the war is on. As the war goes over into the phase of a world conflagration and develops into an anti Soviet war, British Imperialism is all the more interested in keeping internal peace in India and in "pacifying" the Afridis in the Frontier Tribal Area. It wanted the Congress Ministries to continue. It wanted to arrive at a "settlement" with the national leadership. It offered to suspend the Federal Scheme, repeated its old declaration of Dominion Status being the natural goal for Indian constitutional progress, with the addition of the magic phrase "Westminster Statute". It offered to extend the Viceregal Council and wanted to give the national leadership the privilege of associating in this "just war for democracy". In short it wanted the national leadership to preserve internal peace, to police the country, while it offered no concessions at all to the bourgeoisie. It demanded surrender from the national leadership without offering any tangible concessions to any class. To push through this policy, imperialism relies on the reactionary forces which have always been its allies. It relies upon the Princes, to bludgeon any new rise of the States peoples' movement, to prevent its unity with the national movement in British India. It relies upon leaders of communal reaction who playing upon the religious sentiments of the backward masses seek

to disrupt national unity and struggle. *ITS PRESENT STRATEGY ITS- A-ITS THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS TO FORCE IT INTO SURRENDER ON ITS OWN TERMS IT PLAYS ON THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP'S FEAR OF MASSES AND MASS STRUGGLE IT BRINGS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE BOURGEOISIE (MEASURES LIKE EXCESS PROFITS TAX, SUGAR EXCISE BILL, REFUSAL TO 'MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS AT THE CENTRE ETC.).* In the meanwhile, it launches vicious attack against the Communists and Socialists, against the workers and kisan movements and against political movements generally. *THE POLICY WHICH IMPERIALISM IS FOLLOWING IS TO REJECT EVEN THE MODERATE DEMANDS OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP— RESPONSIBILITY AT THE CENTRE AND A DECLARATION ABOUT INDIA'S RIGHT TO FRAME HER OWN CONSTITUTION AFTER THE END OF THE WAR—TO DECIMATE THE FORCES OF STRUGGLE AND TO FORCE UPON THE BOURGEOISIE AND THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, THUS WEAKENED, A SETTLEMENT DICTATED BY IT*

11. *The policy of the National Leadership* : The policy of the national leadership is determined on the one hand by the explosive possibilities of the war situation, by the existence of the workers' and peasants' movements which may influence the national struggle in a revolutionary way, and on the other hand by the intransigence of imperialism. The obduracy of imperialism forced the Congress Ministries to resign. The withdrawal of Ministries was declared to be the first step towards non-co-operation with the Government but actually it was meant to be pressure for a settlement. Gandhiji openly declared that he was for compromise, for "honourable settlement" and he vigorously discountenanced the idea of struggle. The policy of sitting tight, of refusing to give any active support to the struggles of the toiling masses against the effects of war is pursued by the national leadership as a strategy. *THIS STRATEGY OF STALEMATE IS THE CARRYING OUT OF THE COMPROMISING AND OPPOSITIONAL ROLE OF THE INDIAN BOURGEOISIE IN THE NEW PERIOD AND IN A NEW WAY.* In 1930, the national leadership could launch a mass movement (Civil Disobedience) to fight back imperialist offensive and gain further concessions and to retain the leadership of the movement as against the new rising force of the working class. The danger of that

movement being immediately taken out of its hands and developed into a revolution was not there. On the other hand, the technique of the movement enabled the leadership to disorganise and control mass struggle and use the same as a weapon of bargaining. In 1940, the national leadership with Gandhiji at the head, does not think in terms of mass civil disobedience. The explosive nature of the situation created by war crisis and increased political maturity and organisational strength of the proletariat, its increasing influence in the national movement, and the rise of the new kisan movement, using proletarian methods of organization and struggle, and firmly relying upon the alliance with the proletariat opens the possibility, nay certainty of the national struggle being developed into a revolutionary outbreak. That is why inactivity and stalemate have become the main strategy of the bourgeois leadership today. It is a strategy of allowing the forces of national struggle to be decimated by imperialism. Even when the struggle becomes unavoidable, because of imperialist repression and because of the pressure of the masses, that struggle is not to be of the type of 1930-32 but of a much restricted one carried out by trained Satyagrahis, who can observe perfect non-violence (Gandhiji's speech at Ramgarh and Harijan Article 30 3.40)

Thus with the outbreak of the war, and with the maturing of a revolutionary situation, Gandhism enters into its last and decadent phase. At a time when the enemy is the most vulnerable, when hatred and discontent against imperialist rule is rising in all sections, when the possibility of uniting the people on the widest possible scale for a decisive struggle is the greatest, when the Congress has become a mighty organisation, when the organisation and the consciousness of working class and peasantry has become a powerful factor in the national struggle—at such a time the national leadership postpones struggle, refuses to make any preparations for it, allows the most militant sections of the national front to be decimated, keeps the workers' and peasants' struggles away from the national movement, and seeks to disunite the Congress itself by insisting on the complete faith in the Gandhian constructive programme.

12. *Basic Line of the Proletariat : IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS MAIN TASK IN THIS WAR PERIOD, THE PROLETARIAT AND ITS PARTY WILL HAVE TO CONDUCT A PERSISTENT FIGHT TO EXPOSE*

AND COUNTERACT THE ANTI-STRUGGLE AND COMPROMISING INFLUENCE OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, TO PROGRESSIVELY ISOLATE THE COMPROMISERS, AND ADVANCE TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF THE PROLETARIAN HEGEMONY IN THE NATIONAL STRUGGLES AHEAD. The bourgeois policy aims at compromise, a settlement either through avoiding struggle altogether or after a sham and short-lived struggle. The realisation of this aim will mean the disruption of the forces of national unity and struggle which have been built through the last 20 years. It will mean strengthening of communal reaction, and co-operation with the British in their war which they are trying to turn against the Soviet. The policy of the proletariat on the other hand is to carry forward the achievements of national unity and struggle to develop an uncompromising struggle against imperialism through the Congress, to lead it forward to the pitch of a full-fledged national democratic revolution, and thus deal a mortal blow at British imperialism and war. *WHETHER THE PROLETARIAT SUCCEEDS IN ACHIEVING ITS TASK OR NOT DEPENDS HOW RAPIDLY IT IS ABLE TO COUNTERACT AND DEFEAT THE BOURGEOIS POLICY, HOW RAPIDLY IT IS ABLE TO COME FORWARD AS THE LEADER AND UNIFIER OF THE PEOPLE, AS THE INITIATOR OF POLITICAL MASS ACTIONS AGAINST IMPERIALIST REPRESSION, AS THE ORGANISER OF THE PEASANTRY, AS A DECISIVE FORCE*

13. *Struggle against Compromise : United National Front in Action* : The task of isolating the compromisers and of advancing towards proletarian hegemony has to be performed within the four corners of the United National Front—the main base for it is the National Congress, the broadest possible mobilisation of the Indian people. In fact the fight against compromise is the fight to win the majority of the Congressmen and the broadest section of the people for struggle, to win them for developing the struggle in whatever form it comes into a revolutionary struggle for independence. Hence our struggle against compromisers must be accompanied simultaneously with the resolute effort to build the Congress as organ of people's struggle, as an organ of the United National Front. During the last six years the National Congress has registered a phenomenal growth, and has extended its influence among the middle class as well as among the toiling masses. The idea has taken



shape and found wide support especially since the Lucknow and Faizpur Congresses that Congress must develop as the united organ of the will of the people, and that it must develop closer ties with workers' and peasants' organisations. (This implied the adoption or at least recognition by the Congress of the characteristic method of struggle of the working class.) Since the Anti-Constitution Strike of April 1, 1937, the political strike led by Communists has become a regular feature of great national celebration days fixed by the Congress. A point has reached when the giant numerical strength of the National Congress can be transformed into political and organisational strength, only if it adopts a correct attitude to the basic demands of the workers and peasants, if it develops friendly relations with their organisations and if it recognises their technique of struggle as a part of the national struggle. For thus only could the Congress develop further and grow into an organ of uncompromising revolutionary struggle of the United Nation. For it is only when the nationwide mass civil disobedience movement can be enriched and sharpened through the simultaneous unleashing of political general strike, and No-Tax, No-Rent struggles led by Kisan Committees (class organs), would it be possible to raise it to the level of a mass uprising, bringing over the army and the police to the popular side. Without such a development, the nationwide struggle launched by the National Congress must always end in defeat and compromise.

14. *Gandhism's New Line* : As against this during the last three years, the years of Congress Ministries, Gandhism has consistently put forward its new line—the line of the indefinite working of Ministries, of winning independence through gradual constitutional progress. This had its counterpart in the policy of surrendering the workers' and peasants' demands at the pressure of anti-national vested interests, of alienating the workers' and peasants' organisations from the Congress (drive against Kisan Sabhas), of banning and discountenancing political strike on national celebration days, of tightening the Congress organisation in order to eliminate Socialists and Communists from the Congress. Gandhism's disruptive fight for a homogeneous Working Committee and for a homogeneous Congress and for the strict imposition of "the constructive programme" on the Congress, its refusal to launch national disobedience movement, all these are the logical continuation of Gandhiji's new line—of its third and decadent phase. Gandhism's

new line is the negation of the line of United National Front—a line which corresponds to the growth of the national forces of struggle during the last six years—“line” which alone can develop the national struggle forward to victorious revolution. Gandhism in its last phase disrupts and destroys the Congress and seeks to bend it down to a technique of struggle which must end in compromise and disaster, at time when all factors are ripe for its being developed into a victorious revolution. Hence our struggle against Gandhism, is not only exposure of the logic of its political line at every stage and turn; it is also the concrete fight for building the Congress units from below as units of organs of struggle.

*National struggle through Congress :* Hence in this period while carrying out an independent action by the class organisations, we must intensify the effort to build up the Congress as the organ of people's movement. Without waiting for “call for struggle” from above, we shall wherever we influence the Congress organisations, undertake the formation of Congress Volunteer Corps, and place the Congress units on fighting basis with cadres of trained organisers, apparatus for production and distribution of literature etc. The local Congress units must initiate struggle against suppression of civil liberties etc. The almost Congress whole heartedly support IN ACTION the struggle of workers and peasants for war allowance and against every economic distress. By thus identifying themselves with the existing and developing struggles, will the Congress units grow and draw strength from the masses and be able to move the whole Congress towards struggle. Thus our struggle for Gandhism is at the same time the concrete struggle to build the Congress from below into an organ of struggle, to convert the national struggle into a revolutionary struggle

15. *Political exposure of the compromisers and Gandhism :* Political exposure of the compromisers, of Gandhism, its technique and leadership, is such a part of struggle against compromise as the popularisation of the programme of the national revolution. Every move to delay or restrict the struggle, every attempt to vulgarise the basic slogans of the Congress must be sharply criticised. Every effort to put across the lie that the present war is a just war must be exposed. In exposing Gandhism, we do not focus attention of criticising its economic and philosophical absurdities. What we have to concentrate on is the political significance of the insistence on the constructive programme and non-violence. This insistence

has become the technique of side-tracking the issue of struggle, of dividing the national forces of compromise. Today the slogan of the leadership of Gandhi is not raised in the context of the unity of the Congress, but in order to postpone and delay struggle, to restrict it. It is necessary to expose Gandhism's last and reactionary phase, in which it repudiates its own achievements, gives up mass civil disobedience, disrupts the Congress and its unity.

The exposure of Gandhism, the opposition to Gandhiji's leadership in so far it opposes and restricts struggle, sharp criticism of the compromisers, does not mean giving up the line of United National Front. Or repudiating the slogan of the unity of the Congress. On the other hand in this period when a national struggle is the urgent need of the hour, the failure to bring out the anti-struggle character of Gandhism before the people, the failure to unmask compromisers, would itself mean the rejection of the line of united national front. The exposure of Gandhism and the criticism of the compromisers is in fact the defence of the Congress as an organ of struggle, the defence of its unity, of its heritage. Our policy of opposing Gandhism and Gandhian leadership has nothing in common with the slogan of 'alternative leadership of Roy or with the slogan of Two Congresses raised by Bose. Roy's opposition to Gandhism is formal and mechanical. It is coupled with the denial of the imperialist nature of the war, with the denial of the need for launching national struggle now. Change of leadership through organisational coup first—struggle afterwards, this is Roy's disruptive line. Bose's opposition to Gandhism and the compromisers is factional and opportunist. This refusal to develop struggle against the suppression of civil liberties in Bengal, his attempted pact with the Hindu Mahasabha and then with the Muslim League, his rival B.P.C.C.—all these unmask him as a disruptor of the Congress, as one who objectively helps the compromisers. Our struggle against Gandhism is political. It aims at winning over the majority of Congressmen to the path of struggle through carrying political conviction not merely by words but by deeds of proletarian initiative against war, against the effects of war, and against imperialist repression. Our struggle against Gandhism is coupled with actively moving the Congress Committees to prepare for national struggle, and to support campaigns against the effects of war to support action against repression. It builds the United National Front and strengthens the Congress as an organ of struggle.

16. *Demarcation from 'Left' Nationalist and Petty-bourgeois Socialist Tactics* : The policy of Party in this period is demarcated sharply from the policy of all petty-bourgeois parties and groups (C.S.P. leadership, Forward Bloc and the Royists) by the recognition that compromise is not inevitable, by the firm faith in the power, and the political action and the role of the proletariat, by the determination to develop the same and to realise hegemony of the proletariat. *THE LEFT NATIONALIST AND PETTY-BOURGEOIS SOCIALIST GROUPS DENY THE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE WHICH THE PROLETARIAT IS GOING TO PLAY IN THE PRESENT WAR PERIOD* Their denial of the only effective force which could prevent compromise, leads their "opposition" into not only futile and factional but disruptive channels. Bose's thunder against compromise leads to his refusal to launch struggle for civil liberties in Bengal in alliance with Communists. It develops into a factional struggle against the Working Committee and leads to the disruptive slogan of "TWO Congresses". It ends in alliance with communalist reactionaries (pact with Hindu Mahasabha). Roy's denial of the proletariat and its role finds expression, in his taking the Gandhian stand that the country is not prepared, in his rejection of the national struggle, in his veiled support to imperialist war. His "opposition" to Gandhiji is disruptive and opportunist. What he puts forward is in reality by an alternative constitutionalist line. He is a masked compromiser. The C.S.P. leadership's complete divorce from the proletariat leads them into violent vacillations. At Wardha, they wanted to launch a symbolic Satyagraha all on their own to express their opposition to compromise. Now at Ramgarh, they have relapsed into a complete subservience to Gandhism. Their denial of the role of the proletariat, their repudiation of Marxism leads them back to the protective shell of Gandhism which they have not yet outgrown. As the struggle and crisis develops, it becomes clear that every "left" or "Socialist" trend has either to line itself firmly with the proletariat or to become a variant of bourgeois line of compromise and disruption. Thus in this period, no vague left unity, based on the mere acceptance of a left programme can serve any purpose. A clear demarcation from all left nationalist and petty-bourgeois Socialist groups and parties, the unity in action, all elements who firmly implement in practice the proletarian line of developing uncompromising struggle against the main enemy—the broadening and strengthening of the Communist

Party, the Party of the proletariat. —that becomes the principal task.

17. *Independent Action of the proletariat* : The main and the characteristic weapon of the proletariat and its party, for the prevention of compromise, for the unleashing of national struggle and for raising it to the pitch of a revolution is independent mass action in the form of political mass strike. The most urgent task of the Party in this period is to utilise the situation created by the war to rapidly raise the political consciousness and political activity of the proletariat. The events of the first six months of the war, the 2nd October Strike of Bombay Textile workers against War, the Independence Day Strike of 30,000 Cawnpore workers, the strike at Dehri, the organised participation of the working class of Calcutta, Coimbatore, Sholapur and other centres in the Independence Day demonstrations conclusively prove that the Indian proletariat is emerging as an independent political force on a national scale. These achievements have to be carried forward. In the present period, the proletariat must be able to act swiftly with a political strike at every attack against the national movement, at every blow at the liberties of the people. It must be in a position to support the national struggle launched by the Congress, with a political general strike in all industries including Railways and Transport. It must be able to firmly guide the Kisans so that they develop the No-Tax and No-Rent campaigns under the leadership of their own committees. The political consciousness and activity of the working class ripens and matures through its experience in the economic battles. In the period of war, this maturing takes place very rapidly through the economic battles against the effects of war. The tide of *war-allowance strikes* which is rising everywhere and of which the glorious strike of 1,60,000 Textile workers in Bombay was the most important, has tremendous importance. The significance of the war-allowance strike movement lies in this that, firstly, it unites the entire working class because the demand for a wage rise to neutralise the rise in prices, is a demand which affects workers in all industries. Secondly, it wins for the working class the admiration and sympathy of the other classes in the country who are equally suffering from the rise in prices. It heartens the peasant and gives him a lead. Thirdly, the experience of the war-allowance strike, focusses the attention of the worker on the fundamental antagonism between war-mongering imperialism and the Indian people. It

becomes a school for political consciousness for the backward workers. To prepare for war-allowance strikes throughout the country to develop them into general strikes supported by all workers in the locality, to win sympathy for it among the other sections of the city poor and peasantry, to carry on intensive political propaganda and training during the strike, to defeat police measures against the strikes, to make the workers conscious of their role in the national struggle—these are the main urgent tasks in regard to the war-allowance strikes. Intensive political propaganda during all strikes, in the war period stressing how the proletariat has to act in the defence of the nation, how it has to play the role of the champion of people's liberties, becomes a task of utmost importance.

18. *Political Strikes against repression* : Political protest strikes on the national celebration days fixed by the Congress is a powerful method of isolating the compromisers and of winning the majority of the Congressmen for struggle. This was strikingly demonstrated by the country-wide strikes which took place on the Independence Day and by the participation of the working class in the Independence Day processions. Though these strikes were banned by the Working Committee and Gandhiji, they were appreciated by the rank and file Congressmen and the local Congress leadership. That gave a proletarian impress to the Independence Day slogans against compromise, slogans demanding struggle caught on in the whole procession. We have, therefore, to develop the political protest strike movement and raise to higher level when political general strikes against repression would become possible. In the measure this movement grows, in that measure we would be able to hasten the national struggle and when it is actually launched, we would be able to transform it into a revolutionary struggle.

19. *Revolutionary alliance between workers and peasants* : Protest strikes or even political general strikes of the workers by themselves cannot succeed in breaking the stalemate, in transforming a restricted Satyagraha struggle into a revolutionary struggle. The decisive factor in our country is the peasantry. One of the most crucial question of our revolution is, who moves the peasantry, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat? Agrarian revolution is the axis of national revolution and the revolutionary alliance of workers and peasants is the only weapon of realising it. Hence the most important task before the proletariat and its party today is to make a decisive bid for the leadership of the proletariat. In the first six months of

the war, the Kisan movement lagged behind. This was due to the neglect of the Kisan work on our part in this period. This must be corrected. The Kisan has now begun to feel the effects of the war. Kisan demands that he must get the advantage of the raised prices of his produce. He demands the control of profiteering made on the prices of manufactured goods. Fixation of minimum prices to be paid to him and fixation of maximum prices for manufactured goods are his demands. On this basis Kisan agitation must be begun. Resistance to forcible recruitment, resistance to forcible war levies shall have to be organised and the whole movement directed towards developing a countrywide No-Rent movement. The character of such struggle today would be different from what it was in 1930. It would be fought under the leadership of the class organs of the Kisans, the Kisan Sabhas and Kisan Committees, organs of the proletarian type. These can play their revolutionary role in the period only if they are led by a proletarian core, by Communists. Hence the main *tasks on the Kisan Front* are : (i) building up mass Kisan Sabhas and Kisan Committees on the basis of price agitation, (ii) frequent fraternisation between war-allowance strikes and Kisan in neighbouring villages by joint conference, (iii) enrolment of Kisan Volunteers, (iv) strengthening of the party in the villages and (v) popularisation of the main slogans of national revolution among the Kisans.

20. *Anti-War agitation : part of the fight for unleashing mass struggle* : As a party of the proletariat and a section of the International Communist movement, we are pledged to carry on a persistent fight against Imperialist War. We have laid bare the imperialist character of the war, exposed the role of British Imperialism as the main aggressor which is interested in continuing and spreading the war and developing it further into a war against the Soviet Union, in our agitation and propaganda. From the preliminary stage of anti-war agitation and actions, we passed on to the stage of countrywide strikes of workers for war-allowance. This movement is drawing in a large mass of backward workers and giving them new political consciousness. The Kisan movement against the effects of war has begun to develop. This second stage of mass economic battles against the effects of war is the prelude to the third phase, the nationwide struggle led by the Congress for freedom and democracy in the country. This is the highest form which our struggle against war can take. For if we succeed in

making such a struggle possible, if we succeed in developing it into revolutionary channels, we would have struck a mortal blow against the chief war-monger—Britain. Defeat of Britain in India is victory to the cause of the forces of peace and democracy headed by the Soviet Union. In the present phase, our struggle against war is not apart from the workers' and peasants' struggle against the effects of war, from the independent political actions of workers and students against repression. It is not apart from the national struggle which we are striving to bring about. The struggle against recruitment and war levies must be conducted not through individual picketing and courting arrests. In fact the entire preparatory anti-war agitation must be carried on secretly and without exposing our cadres for arrest. The cadres and resources must be preserved for moving the masses against war effects, against repression and thus towards national struggle. The original error made in certain provinces must be corrected.

21. *Basic slogans of the National Revolution* : The popularisation of the basic slogans of the National Democratic Revolution has special significance in this period. These slogans are as follows

1. Complete overthrow of the Imperialist rule, withdrawal of the British Army of occupation;

2. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY elected on adult franchise to meet after the defeat of Imperialism, as the organ of power and to frame the constitution of the country;

3. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC guaranteeing to the recognised minorities, the right of protection of their separate religion, culture and language;

4. Arming of the people, National People's Army;

5. Abolition of all forms of landlordism, serfdom and illegal cesses, cancellation of debts;

6. 8-hour day guaranteed living wage for the wage workers and the employee;

7. Confiscation of foreign capital and nationalisation of all basic industries, natural resources, banks, shipping and transport.

We popularise these slogans to bring concretely before the people what complete independence and Constituent Assembly would mean to the various sections. The meaning of Independence and Constituent Assembly must be placed in three simple slogans before the people.



To all the people, it would mean the achievement of full democratic freedom, in a democratic republic with a people's army:

To the Kisans, it would mean abolition of landlordism, serfdom, illegal cesses and cancellation of debts:

To the workers and employees, it would mean 8-hour day and a guaranteed living wage.

It must, however, be clearly understood that we do not pitch this programme as an alternative to the programme of the Congress. More popularisation of a more radical programme would not bring revolution any nearer. National Congress is entering the new round of national struggles with the two slogans : Complete Independence outside the orbit of Imperialism and Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage. Our central task today is to make the REVOLUTIONARY implementing of these basic slogans possible. Our main task is to transform the civil disobedience movement launched by the Congress to the pitch of a revolutionary mass struggle. Democratic Republic and People's Army would be achieved only by making REVOLUTIONARY struggle for Independence and Constituent Assembly possible. Abolition of landlordism, the realisation of the basic demands of the working class and nationalisation of key industries : all this would become possible by achieving the revolutionary participation of the working class and peasantry in the national struggle. Our day-to-day agitation and work among the workers and kisans among the broad masses rings out with the basic slogans of the National Democratic Revolution. *BECAUSE WE WANT TO PLACE THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE OF THE IMPENDING NATIONAL STRUGGLE BEFORE THE PEOPLE, BECAUSE WE WANT TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY REALISATION OF THE CONGRESS PROGRAMME*

The popularisation of these slogans is a part of our struggle against the compromisers. The compromisers are seeking to avoid the national struggle or to strangle it within the four corners of a restricted Satyagraha. They want to prevent the participation of the masses in the struggle. This can only lead to a compromise with imperialism and not its overthrow and to the achievement of independence. In fact the compromisers persist in vulgarising the conception of Constituent Assembly in continually suggesting that the Constituent Assembly may even decide upon something less than independence. They are preparing the ground for an ignoble

surrender to imperialism. As against the Gandhian programme of Constituent Assembly to be granted by imperialism, we will popularise the Constituent Assembly as the organ of power, meeting as the culmination of triumphant revolution. As against the Gandhian dream of "independence" equal to Dominion Status of the Westminster variety, we shall place before the people the goal of People's Republic, People's Army, Elected Officials. As against the Gandhian concept of Swaraj in which the social structure undergoes no fundamental change and the system of rack-renting and debt-slavery remain intact, we shall put forward the slogan of abolition of landlordism and cancellation of indebtedness. As against the Gandhian ideal of "trusteeship" of the factory owner, we shall fight for a social system in which the right of the worker to an 8-hour day, living wage etc. is guaranteed and the basic key industries nationalised.

Popularising these slogans of the national revolution on the most extensive scale in every meeting, in every procession and in every conflict with the Government, every strike every demonstration of workers, students, kisans and Congressmen etc., we shall strive to make these slogans—THE SLOGANS OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

22. *Organised functioning of the party* : elementary need : We have entered into a period of the greatest revolutionary possibilities, of great revolutionary experiences. In such a period the tasks which ordinarily require years are achieved in months. New revolutionary experience creates new power and consciousness in the masses. This consciousness has to be used to build and strengthen the party. On the other hand a strong Party, i.e. a party which knows how to function as a BOLSHEVIK ORGANISATION — a Bolshevik Party is needed to harness the new consciousness, new power of the masses to achieve the political tasks outlined above. In this period both these tasks have to be achieved simultaneously. The Party has to grow, organise itself while at the same time it is called upon to perform such varied political tasks which an organised party alone can cope with. Hence it is of the utmost importance for each party unit first and foremost to function as an ORGANISED UNIT, to root out all individualism and chaotic ways of functioning to tighten up the entire organisation to convert each unit into a machine that gets things done, is the urgent need. This precaution is indispensable if our PARTY is to GROW with the new revolutionary possibilities and become equal to the political tasks of the new period.

# INDIA BEFORE THE STORM

Michael Carritt

Since the outbreak of war the political crisis in India has matured with extreme rapidity. All the difficulties of British Imperialism in India and its fundamental conflict with the interests and welfare of the Indian people have been increased a hundredfold by the war situation. All the sunshine talk of the propagandists and the feverish scurrying around of the apostles of "negotiation" and "honourable compromise" have failed to hide the fact that the deadlock between imperialism and the national movement still remains unresolved. On the contrary the Ramgarh Session of the Congress, though still leaving the main issues hanging in the air, has done nothing to make things easier for those (by no means only confined to the Viceroy's side) who hoped for a compromise.

To understand the real nature of the political crisis in India it is necessary to consider three aspects of the present situation, all of which are, of course, fundamentally inter-connected; firstly, the international significance of the weakening of British Imperialism's hold over its main strategic and economic stronghold; secondly, the historic stage of development of the national struggle; and thirdly, the growing tensions within the national movement itself which reflect the growth of new forces and the re-alignment of classes.

The significance for the whole world of the Indian challenge to British imperialism is tremendous. Within the first few months of the war, British Imperialism, the leading world imperialist power, is being seriously attacked in its most vital spot. Before the war has fully developed, before the masses in the belligerent countries are fully awake to the extent of suffering they will have to endure, the Indian people, and in particular the Indian working class, have thrown down a clear challenge and are mobilising their forces for struggle. The effect of this challenge upon the subject people in other parts of the Empire has been far-reaching.

The strategic and economic importance of India to British Imperialism is such that the present Indian crisis is having a profound effect upon the whole war effort of the British and French imperialists. British military writers recognise India as Britain's strategic base in the Far East, as well as providing almost unlimited man-power. This was so in the last war. It will be even more so in this war, as was emphasised in advance by the Chatfield Report on the reorganisation of the Army in India. A strong, and more or less self-supporting, force is required in the East not only for preserving internal order and for the protection of such strategic outposts as Aden and Singapore; but also as a striking force against the Soviet Union. In the last war troops from India were used for the invasion of Iraq (Mesopotamia) and Iran (Persia). Since it is clearly part of the British strategic plan to spread the war against the Soviet Union through those two countries, it is clear that India has to be considered as a "jumping-off ground" of the greatest importance in the event of the Allied war plans against the Soviet Union coming to maturity.

Not only strategically, but also economically, India is the pivot of the Empire. Some two-and-a-half times as much British capital is invested in India, according to Sir Robert Kindersley, as in all the rest of the colonial Empire put together. The exploitation of India, with its wealth of natural resources, has been developed to a far higher degree than elsewhere in the Empire and in the depth of the world economic crisis India was a valuable source of strength to British capitalism. In the period of four or five years some £250 million in gold was drained out of India, representing the savings of the middle peasantry who were unable to pay their taxes and meet their other commitments by the sale of their produce at world prices.

Strategically and economically, therefore, India is the keystone of the British Empire, the basis of a ruling class whose foreign-political aim is to develop the war against the Soviet Union and whose economic power rests on its super-profits reaped from the exploitation of the colonial peoples.

That it is at this very point that the edifice shows signs of cracking and that the people are already in active revolt against the war, is of tremendous significance for the forces of world socialism in their struggle against monopoly capitalism and in defence of the Soviet Union.

In the last world war, India was made to carry enormous burdens and imperialism revealed its naked aggressiveness. But the movements for liberation were in an early and undeveloped stage. The Indian National Congress was still a small bourgeois party petitioning the Viceroy for more adequate representation for Indians in the services and for preferential tariffs for Indian industry. From 1906 its most militant section turned to acts of individual terrorism, the working class was unorganised and in general unacquainted with the strike weapon, the peasantry though driven by starvation to sporadic outbreaks of revolt, was unorganised and politically unconscious.

The politically conscious middle class believed the promises and the slogans presented to them by the imperialists, and they faithfully followed the lead of those whom imperialism had bought over with minor concessions of a constitutional or commercial nature. It was only at the end of the war that discontent began to find open expression. Infected by the world revolutionary movement, the first wave of big strikes, the first real attack upon the foundations of British Imperialism in India, took place in the years 1918-1921. In those years, in the course of bitter struggle and military terror, the nationalist movement was born and the ground prepared for its development to the powerful striking force that it is today.

The record of imperialism during the post-war period is a record of intensified aggression against every section of the Indian people. Its urgent necessity to preserve its exclusive control over the colonial markets without interference either from rival imperialists or from the rising colonial bourgeoisie, is reflected in the Ottawa Agreements, Tariff and Currency policies and so on. As the contradictions of capitalism develop this aggressiveness of imperialist rule sharpens and is seen in an increasingly uncompromising attitude towards the Indian bourgeoisie, a deepening of the already advanced agrarian crisis and a savage attack upon working-class conditions and organisations.

The 1935 Constitution sums up, with a clarity that constitutional verbosity is unable to obscure, both the difficulties and the aims of British Imperialism in India. Whilst giving some minor and unreal concessions in the provincial sphere, it securely planted real political power in the hands of the Viceroy and meticulously hedged it in with innumerable safeguards. At the same time it revealed the

vital necessity of completely removing economic, financial and military power from the sphere in which "responsible" ministers were to operate; and it perfected, with apt imperialist cunning, a plan for the constitutional enslavement of the people of India to the reactionary princes in alliance with vested interests and communalists. The alliance with reaction was consolidated; the new democratic forces were to be effectually stifled.

Thus, with the outbreak of war an already critical situation was brought to a head. It was inevitable that the negotiations conducted with the Viceroy, after the outbreak of the war, should fail to find a suitable way out for those who hoped for a compromise and, with pathetic innocence, regarded India's challenging opposition to the war simply as a bargaining counter in a verbal debate with imperialism. The whole history of the last twenty-five years has shown a progressively narrowing basis for compromise. The Viceroy saw no alternative but to give an "insolent" and uncompromising reply to the Indian demand; and the growing pressure of the masses from below made it impossible for the Congress leaders to suggest a compromise that would be acceptable.

Today, with the outbreak of the second imperialist war, the demand, first formulated in 1930, is for clear-cut independence and an end to the British connexion. From the outset of the war the conflict has been sharp and undisguised. The tendency to compromise, still strong in some quarters, is hampered by the whole history and experience of 25 years; and the political experience of the masses during those years has strengthened them against their being again misled by deceptive slogans.

Accompanying the growing tension between imperialism and the Congress, tension within the national movement itself grows increasingly acute. The class struggle is maturing, and this maturity is sharply reflected in the course the Congress takes. The magnificent Bombay strike on October 2, the wave of strikes sweeping across India—Allahabad, Cawnpore, Calcutta, etc.—the decision of the Bombay T.U.C. to declare general strike in support of the demand for a 40 per cent. war bonus, culminating in the present strike of 150,000 Bombay Textile workers, and the mass meetings demonstrations and resolutions taking place in every locality and industry (including railways)—all these events present overwhelming evidence that the Indian masses *are already on the path of struggle.*

This activity sharpens the conflict between Left and Right within the Congress, and makes the mass pressure irresistible.

The growth of the strong left-wing movement in India dates from the big strike movement in 1928, the subsequent nation-wide struggle in 1930, and the disillusionment of the masses with Gandhi's betrayals in the following years. This disillusionment, strongly felt by the younger elements within the Congress who were turning towards socialism, resulted not in weakening the Congress but in broadening its basis amongst the masses. Under the first provincial elections (February, 1937) Congress was swept into office in eight provinces with big majorities on a programme of "Wreck the Constitution" and radical labour and peasant reforms.

In two and a half years Congress membership leapt from 600,000 to five million.

The left wing, including Nehru, opposed acceptance of office in the provinces, fearing that the growing mass movement would be abandoned in favour of orthodox parliamentary methods and that imperialism would succeed in enticing the Congress ministers into constitutional co-operation.

The achievements of the Congress Ministries were not very remarkable; the bare fringe of the social problem was touched and the ministers tended to function bureaucratically. The ministries, restrained on the one hand by their financial impotence and by the power in the hands of the civil service were, on the other hand, more and more clearly anxious to conciliate vested interests who were opposed to radical land and labour reforms. Notably, in Behar the Congress Ministers sided with the landlords against the peasants, and in Bombay they introduced reactionary anti-working-class trade union legislation.

In this situation conflict between the organised workers and peasants and the Congress governments was inevitable and became increasingly frequent. Mass activities were carried on to bring pressure to bear upon the Congress Ministries; criticism was not hidden and became more sharp; big demonstrations were staged and independent class actions for the remedy of pressing grievances increased in frequency and militancy. The Congress Ministers, unwilling to comply with the demands, complained that they were being embarrassed, tried to restrain the masses and finally resorted to police orders to suppress these activities.

Whilst it was the working class and peasant leaders, communists and socialists, who led the masses in these "embarrassing" activities, there was simultaneously developing within the Congress a strong movement of radical discontent amongst the petty-bourgeoisie and unemployed youth who saw no hope of progress from "working the Constitution" under the supervision of British Viceroy.

The crisis developing within the Congress as a result of this growing dissatisfaction and the increased mass activities came to a head with the re-election in 1939 of Subhas Bose as Congress President in opposition to the nominee of Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee. The left wing voted solidly for Bose and were followed by the large mass of Congress delegates who, on this straightforward issue of "struggle" or "no struggle", unhesitatingly stood for a positive step forward.

Bose's re-election was immediately recognised by the imperialists and the Gandhists alike as a significant indication of the temper of the country and the growing influence of the left wing in the national movement. The subsequent re-establishment of Gandhi's authority and the old leadership simply revealed the organisational weakness of the left and its inability to give a practical lead that was capable of steering the people clear of the personalities and the side issues which were utilised to obscure the major political issue. Bose himself lacked either the political qualities or the solid mass support to give this lead, and the way was left open for a disciplinary drive within the Congress. At this critical moment Nehru stood aloof and failed to give a lead; by condemning the activities of the Left he gave the appearance of lining up with the Right wing and facilitating their attempts to take disciplinary action against the Left elements.

The key to the present rising tide of national struggle is to be found in the new vigour of the Trade Union movement and its proven ability to initiate a mass struggle. The movement achieved unity in 1938 and, though its membership still is only reckoned to be 380,000 the last few years have witnessed tremendous activities which have drawn into action thousands of unorganised workers. 1938 saw the highest number yet of workers involved in strikes (over 650,000); but already in the first six months of the war it is reckoned that over 400,000 have been involved, mainly in the big industrial centres of Bombay, Calcutta, Cawnpore, Allahabad



and Ahmedabad And this is in spite of increased repression, the wholesale arrest of leaders and the use of the Defence of India Act to exterr trade union organisers and to prohibit meetings and the distribution of leaflets Of particular importance is the unparalleled spread of the strike movement to small, out-of-the-way and unorganised industries The close association of the workers in these isolated factories with the peasantry is an important factor in the development of peasant organisations and their growing political consciousness

Since the war we have the news of the magnificent strike of 90,000 workers in Bombay against the war (about which the nationalist press remained absolutely silent) the successful strike of 30,000 in Cawnpore, successful strike of 36,000 in Calcutta, strike in Ahmedabad for war bouns, strike in Digboi oilfields, the successful strike of 15 000 Calcutta scavengers and the present stoppage of 150,000 in Bombay on the demand for 25 per cent war bouns On Independence Day more than 50 factories stopped work for the day

The peasant movement, only organised on an all-India basis for three or four years, is one of the most significant developments of recent years and one which, because of its ideology and its class-consciousness, must necessarily give an entirely new complexion to any national struggle in the future It has a membership of nearly one million and is particularly strong in Behar, United Provinces and Madras

Amongst the peasantry there is a very keen interest in the achievement of the Soviet Union in freeing the peasants from their age-old bondage to the landlords, and in recent years the amount of socialist literature circulating in the vernacular languages has increased enormously

Thus, whilst Congress is still calling for discipline and restraint, a movement is developing from below on a popular basis which is drawing into action workers, peasants, students and large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie It is clear that such a movement has the organisational task of uniting all the active anti-imperialist forces, basing itself upon the feeling of the masses and being prepared to sweep forward the Congress into action on a national scale It will be necessary to overcome sectional differences on the Left and give an increasingly clearly defined political leadership that will represent

the rising movement of workers and peasants without whom no national movement is possible. The other left groups are disintegrating; only the Communists have a record of persistent day-to-day work in the different sectors of the national movement, and they have a responsible role to play in continuing to give this political lead, to give it clearly as the most active and advanced section of the anti-imperialist front, and to strengthen support in the working class and peasant organisations.

In the present situation it is clear that the vast majority of the politically conscious people are prepared for struggle: and that the brunt of the struggle must fall on just those sections of the people over whom the influence of the Communists has extended most during the last three years—the workers, the peasants and the radical bourgeois. This fact completely alters the complexion of any future struggle.

It is against this background of rising mass struggle that the moves of imperialism and of the upper national leadership acquire significance. It is clear that the basis for negotiations between the Congress and the Viceroy has necessarily been narrowed down by the growing acuteness of imperialist contradictions; the contradictions within the Congress are also extremely sharp. The prospect of a mass struggle fills Mr. Gandhi with feelings of horror and foreboding. He writes in his paper *Harijan* : “It has been suggested to me that as soon as I declare civil disobedience, I shall find a staggering response. The whole labour world and kisans (peasants) in many parts of India will declare a simultaneous strike. If that happened I should be most embarrassed and all my plans would be upset. I must confess that I have no plan in front of me. Let me say that God will send the plan.” He says : “I have not lost faith in Britain I like the pronouncement of the Viceroy. I believe in his sincerity.” Or again “...If I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction....nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting in anarchy and red ruin.”

Gandhi still wields great influence over the Indian people. He also speaks for that very powerful, though numerically small, section of the national movement whose interests, while still basically opposed to imperialism are also fundamentally threatened by the prospect of a mass struggle which cannot but differ radically from the previous civil disobedience movements. These people are

feverishly trying to persuade themselves that a "compromise with honour" is still possible. They pretend to bang the door on negotiations with each succeeding declaration of their determined opposition to imperialism. the wordy challenge is thrown down again and again in the hope that the Viceroy will scuttle his ship. But always the door miraculously remains open for further negotiation.

The Viceroy, by no means innocent at this game, hopes to use this section of the Congress as a means of disrupting and smashing the national unity. they themselves hope to use the mass discontent as a means of screwing some small concessions out of the Viceroy.

The All-India Congress Committee meeting at Wardha reflected the increased tension between the protagonists. On the one hand bitter resentment at the Viceroy's apparent "insolence" and refusal to play ball, on the other, barely concealed panic at the thought of having to apply mass sanctions against imperialism. Plenty of strong statements were made, but the inevitable door was left ajar. Nehru himself hesitatingly professed to believe that it was yet possible for imperialism, by a noble gesture, to transfer power to India and thereby to convert the imperialist war into a "just" war.

In this tense atmosphere and against the background of the Bombay Textile strike, the Congress annual session took place at Ramgarh on March 19. The arrest of hundreds of communists all over India, including Comrades Dange, Ghate, Mirajkar, Lahiri and Ranadive, of the popular socialists Jai Prakash Narain and S. Zaheer, of the T.U.C. officials such as R. S. Nimbkar and Parulekar, both well-known in this country, as well as hundreds of active Congressmen and students, hung like shadow over the meeting and impressed the delegates with the critical situation before them.

Jawaharlal Nehru moved the main resolution of the meeting, declaring again India's firm determination not to lend any support to the imperialist war, demanding complete independence and the right to call a Constituent Assembly in order to frame her own constitution. The resolution was passed almost unanimously, but only after several speakers from the Left had disowned the present policy of inaction and had declared that the people were united behind the Congress demands, but wanted those demands to be supported by immediate action.

Thus, whilst the outward appearance of the Congress after

Tripuri in one of unimpaired and absolute determination to oppose the imperialist war and to lead the struggle for independence, it is clear that discontent inside the party with the present leadership is strong and that the unity desired is unity for struggle. The exclusion of Bose from participation in the proceedings awakened the Left and once more raised irrelevant personal issues.

*The Times* joyfully leaps to the conclusion that Ramgarh represents a crushing victory for Gandhi and the moderates over the "extremists" the communists and socialists. Gandhi, it is true, retains control as a virtual dictator, and he demands implicit obedience to his generalship and his interpretation of Congress policy. The Right wing retains undisputed leadership and, despite all their brave words, have not yet taken the positive step forward to active struggle which is demanded by the majority of Congressmen.

The vital decision for the Indian people is left hanging in the air, and, so far as official resolution is concerned, it rests with Gandhi to decide how, when and if struggle will be launched—whether it shall be active non-violence or non-violent inaction.

But even *The Times* has soberly to admit that as yet no solution is in sight and will not be so long as the Congress will not "see reason" in other words, the Right wing retains power, but, in spite of obvious tendencies to throttle down the mass movement, only at the cost of a declaration which leaves no obvious opening for a compromise. The task which the Communists imposed upon themselves at Tripuri one year ago to make the unity of Congress not an abstract unity but unity for struggle—was the guiding principle of all advanced sections of the Congress at Ramgarh. They believe that it is possible, on the basis of Congress resolutions, to lead the people forward into a decisive struggle with imperialism, and that the time has now come, despite the fears and hesitations of Mr. Gandhi, to give a practical expression to the many verbal declarations made by the leaders.

Underlying all the proceedings at Ramgarh, and apparent in the main speeches, was a serious sense of responsibility coupled with deep bitterness at the hundreds of arrests of militant Congressmen taking place daily. Tension was near to breaking point, in front of the delegates even Mr. Gandhi dared not speak of compromise. The determination of the people acts with relentless pressure upon the vacillating leadership.

How does the Labour Party leadership in this country react to the critical situation in India ? They have, along with the rest of the propagandists in the imperialist Press, consistently ignored the growing revolutionary ferment in India, the great strikes and the nationwide opposition to war. They have not uttered a word of protest against the arrest of prominent officials in the Indian T U C or the imprisonment of Congressmen. They have lined themselves up behind the Viceroy in refusing the demand of the Indian people for independence, and in offering an undefined and shadowy Dominion Status, hedged in by safeguards in the undefined and shadowy future.

They singly rebuke the Viceroy for his clumsy inability to dress the proposal for Dominion Status up in a disguise that will fool the Indian people and enable their leaders to find a basis for compromise with honour. And in this they are consistent, not only with their past record of governing the Empire on behalf of the ruling class, but also with their present support of the imperialist war. Quite frankly Mr. Wedgwood Benn declared in the House of Commons on October 26 in the debate on India that "the over-riding consideration in the mind of every honourable member is how they can contribute to the successful issue of the war." India has to be drawn, whether by minor concessions or by force, into full support of the imperialist war with all her resources. That is the "over-riding consideration" for the Labour Party leaders.

But for the Indian people the "over-riding consideration" is their independence. Between these two viewpoints there is an unbridgeable gulf. On the one side stand the imperialists, including the Labour Party leaders, on the other side stand those who desire to free themselves, and all men, from the bondage of imperialist exploitation and who are already moving along the path of open struggle.

The objection of the Labour Party leaders to draw the Indian people into the war must be seen in relation to the alignment of forces within India itself. Purely verbal support is given to the Congress at the same time as complete support is given to the measures of imperialist repression. Under no circumstances is there any change in this line of policy *except on the assumption that the Labour leaders believe that a compromise can be found which will satisfy both the Viceroy and the Congress Right wing.*

Their whole attention is riveted on just that section of the

Congress which wants to protract negotiations. They desire to use Nehru to bridge the gulf between the people of India and the Congress Right wing in precisely the same way as they are being used by imperialism to bridge the gulf between itself and the Congress

But the crisis in India is not a crisis of political differences between leaders; it is not a crisis that can be solved in Viceregal reception rooms. It is the deep and fundamental crisis of imperialism, which war has brought to a head in a period when the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces in India have acquired a new and unconquerable consciousness of their own strength. It is too late now to bandy about the phrases and constitutional futilities of 1919 and 1935. The cancer of British Imperialism in India has to be drastically cut away. The people, not individuals, are gathering their strength for the operation.

For the world and for the future of civilisation what is happening in India is of vital importance and full of hope

## DIARY OF THE STRIKE

*March 3, 1940*

### **Red Sunday—Women Workers Take The Lead**

If by midnight to-day the millowners do not agree to give a 15% rise in wages as war-allowance the strike will begin tomorrow. During the day comes news that workers have already gone on strike. 14 mills had to close at two o'clock. In the evening, a meeting at Kamgar Maidan. The maidan was packed and the overflow from the maidan is ten deep on the road surrounding it. 40,000 workers went on strike at 1 p.m., very much ahead of the scheduled time and date. Women ~~actively~~ began their glorious role. They had heard that the managements had made preparations to lock the night-shift workers in the mills, and to compel them to work in the mills the next day. The women countered, they came out at 1 p.m. and never went inside again. They squatted outside the mill, waiting for hours in the hot sun. They were waiting for the night-shift workers to arrive at the mill-gates, so as to warn them of the millowners' nefarious plan. Police tried to threaten them and make them go away. A batch of women who were ordered to move away left the mill gate and sat in a cloth shop close by waiting for the night-shiftworkers. Police officer goes up to them and orders them to move away. One of the women replies : "You bloody corpse, we are here to buy cloth" and she shows a yard of cloth and "Who the hell are you anyway to ask us to go away?" Outraged dignity hit femininity. The officer hit one of the women on the head with his lathi, whereupon all the women together woman-handled him so vigorously that he had to turn tail and fly.

In the evening at Kamgar Maidan nearby, a lac: the men grim and determined with an air of quiet strength: the women more volatile, more vocal and if anything, more determined. The speeches emphasised the day's events, as signifying the readiness of the workers to fight unitedly for their just demands. The orders issued by the Commissioner of Police prohibiting assemblies and processions, shouting of slogans, is to come into effect tomorrow. So the workers march in processions to the Kamgar Maidan :

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*Report of the Strike Struggles in Bombay Industrial area in 1940 published by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India in June 1940*

*ASMAN HILLA HAI JO GATE ILUN HUM* Police Commissioner's orders condemned amidst thunderous shouts of slogans. *ZULAI KAYADA HANUN PADA* , as an attack by British Imperialism on the workers' rights, against movement for national liberation, thunderous shouts of *'DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM'* Tomorrow the battle royal begins Notwithstanding Government support for millowners' recalcitrance, notwithstanding prohibitory orders of the Commissioner and all the engines of oppression, a lac and sixty thousand workers swore not to yield to any kind of weakness or to any kind of oppression till their just demands were secured

*March 4 1940*

**The Fight is On :**

**The Lac and Sixty Thousand Strong Proletarian Army**

The Red-Letter Day From Byculla Bridge towards the North roads and streets teeming with humanity, humming with the talk of thousands of workers, people in groups talking, discussing, opposite the Sassoon Mill on the island between the tram lines two thousand workers are gathered Half the number watching the Sassoon gates the other half the Morarjee Mill Will any mother-defiled son dare to enter? Not a soul casts a longing glance at the mill gates At the Sassoon gates, the management stand wonderstruck, most of them white men Inexplicable! First time in working class history in Bombay that not a soul seeks to enter No picketing necessary to-day The Morarji Mill silent as a tomb At the Union Office couriers come one after the other, shouting the glorious tidings that the Morbag Mill (Spring Mill) workers have come out The mill is closed Glory be the grandest bit of news The most difficult mill to close, is closed voluntarily but all the workers who joined their brothers on the street The Bastille of disunity has been stormed Unity has been forged No more will the Proletariat of Bombay be divided in their struggles! The unity which will carry forward the workers' struggle for bread and wages into the people's struggle for freedom and peace

The Kohinoor and Spring Mills are deserted At the corner of the lane, a police officer wanting to run with the hare and hunt with the hound says "You people have succeeded very well in this locality" At the Rachel Sassoon Mill, forty women are squatting A few clerks who were attempting to go in look at the women, turn shame faced and go away The manager is furious, he abuses the



women The women threaten to squeeze his very life out of him He appeals to the police but management and police are both helpless the Commissioner of Police Mr Wrong or Right Go Smith (W R G Smith) passes along , witnesses the disgraceful scene of authority helpless something must be done He passes and repasses, the situation continues official prestige must be vindicated He orders the police to arrest the most militant women Ten women arrested, two of them young Christian girls women keep on, nothing daunted

At the Kala Chowki police station bail of fifty rupees cash is demanded, special orders of the Commissioner of Police we say

Ridiculous you can keep the women in custody as long as you like They won't mind' In the Mahim Sector, an old Inspector of Police guilty of sundry provocative acts against women strikers digs in the ribs with police lathis Police treating them as if they were not women at all Too much to bear! A blow with a police lathi rouses the women to frenzy! They surround the police officer and give him the lesson of his lifetime His buttons wrenched away he trying to keep his balance as well as his pants, eight women arrested They have been sitting at the mill gate for eighteen hours They were sitting in the police station for six more hours They refuse to drink or eat! They don't feel like it They want to know how things are going on outside They don't worry about bail They send a message "Don't worry about us We are cheerful! If we want to come out, it's only because we want to fight Let those outside carry on the struggle more intensely That's the only way they can show their affection for us "

### **Evening At Kamgar Maidan**

More than a lac of people, the conquering heroes of the first day sit down, cool deliberations as to their work of the day no fault to find anywhere, glorious role of women emphasised, thunderous applause from thousands of masculine throats the women's message reaches the maidan, it puts life and spirit into everybody, for a moment or two the grimness of the struggle is forgotten, general air of satisfaction as to the achievements of the first day

At the Maratha Hospital It is 10 p m An old man sitting outside the gate, peering into the darkness with half-closed myopic eyes A woman restlessly pacing up and down, the father and

mother waiting for their daughter who is unusually late. They are Christians. We go up and ask : "Are you waiting for your daughter"? They eagerly say : "Yes" "Does your daughter work in a mill"? "Yes" again. We tell them : Your daughter Santan is quite safe. She has been arrested and is in the police lock-up. The mother bursts into tears. We are in a fix; up seeks a young girl of 12 or 13. Santan's sister; she draws herself up, stands on her toes, shakes her head vigorously and bursts out in Hindustani : "What matters it? We are fighting for our bread, and if we want it, we must suffer for it!" The indomitable spirit of the youthful proletariat.

*March 5, 1940*

### **Women Strikers Vigil : Silk Workers' Solidarity**

The second day of the historic strike. Day-break finds the brave women at the mill gates huddling together to keep warm. It is a chill morning. But the hearts and spirits are warm. No bastard strike-breaker will be allowed to break the phenomenal unity of the strike. Hindus, Mussalmans, Harijans, Christians, non-members and members of the Union, had all responded to the call for strike. And was thing going to be broken by a handful of traitors and goondas? No!! And for this the women have come forward to brave the police lathi, the noon-day sun and the morning cold. With parched throats, worn-out frames and tired eyes, they sit and keep their vigil. Late in the morning, a volunteer comes and brings them all some tea. Refreshed they are at it again, never yielding, never flinching, never grumbling.

The day passes off without any serious incident. A volunteer is arrested for shouting "Lal Bavta ki Jai". Just that the nothing else. Thus does foreign imperialism bolster up native capitalism.

### **The Evening At Jamboori Maidan**

A real Jamboori, verily an ocean of heads. A lac and thirty thousand on the Maidan. A grand and inspiring sight. The strike is brought to the depressed classes of Worli. The strength of the proletariat is brought home to everyone that sees. Speeches emphasise the role of imperialism, and its oppressive machinery. Emphasis is laid upon the unity of the struggle. How Hindu, Mussalman, Dhed, Chamar, Ghati, everybody has joined in this struggle. Dr. Ambedkar has also supported the strike. Com. Ranadive reviews the day's events, extols the women for their glorious part and warns the workers of the attempts that are being made to break

the strike. A thousand faces frown at the mention of strike-breakers. Bodes no good for such rascals. They will only succeed in breaking their own heads, not the strike. Com Tambitkar gives the slogan "Lal Bavta ki Jai". Hundred thousand voices take it up and the vaulted dome above reverberates with the thunderous Jai! The mighty voice of the proletariat. Messages of sympathy and support are read out at the meeting. The Amalner workers who have been locked out forget their own troubles and hasten to send fraternal greetings to the workers of Bombay. The Bombay workers are fighting for the rights of the workers of India, for the right of the Indian people, the right of the Indian people to cast away the burden of the imperialist war, the right of the nation to independence. After the speeches, the meeting terminates amidst a deafening roar of *LAL BAVTA KI JAI LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA*. Ten minutes after, not a soul on the maidan. Where has the mammoth crowd vanished? They are the soldiers of the Red Flag. The Proletarian Army. Discipline is in their very blood. No dilly-dallying on the maidan, getting into the way of other people. No mad rushing to and fro. The meeting over, the men wait while the women leave and then they follow. A toddling infant is perfectly safe in a huge concourse like that. Proletarian discipline. The Army that will liberate this country from the foreign yoke and society from classes.

In the evening, the Managing Committee of the B G K U (Red Flag) decides to apply for registration under the Black Industrial Disputes Act. Checkmate again for Mr. Munshi and his ilk. They fondly believed that by placing 25% as the minimum membership, the Communists could be driven out of the mass-front. Poor blind bats! Ideologies do not get a mass base unless they correspond to the historic needs of the class. Class-collaboration indeed!

The Kurla mills are like the grave. The men are all on the streets. Madanpura is a solid block of granite. The workers' unity magnificent! Their methods superb! The prospective strike-breaker is appealed to through his better half. If sweet words won't do, a little firm handling and the trick is done. Strike-breaking in Madanpura? Com Bukhari will go red in the face if he heard such blasphemy. And Com Shahid will smile just one of those tired smiles of his to hear such incredibilities.

Can the leopard change its spots? The Police are getting POLICE again. Com Bhogle the Secretary and Com Kandalgaonkar, the

Vice-President of the G.K.U. were arrested today. They were just supervising the arrangements Pin-pricks by the police. They are angling for an opportunity to use their rusty weapons

The men workers are men all over. A lac and sixty thousand on strike. Why bother about picketing? And who then is going to the mill anyway? So they sit in groups, play cards, smoke bidies and kill time. The brave women to the rescue They remonstrate with their husbands. Plucky! Deaf masculinity They complain to the Union. They are hereby empowered in the name of the Union to seize playing cards wherever and whenever found in the hands of the mere male and to produce them at the mass meetings No sooner said than done.

To-day the great strike has spread. About 15,000 silk mill workers are on strike for Dear Food Allowance

Com. Dange writes to the Sultan of Bombay, the Police Commissioner, reminding him that the strike is legal and picketing is a legal right vested in the Trade Unions. But Mr. Smith will go on Wrong or Right.

To-day ends. The memory of the inspiring Worli meeting and the Mighty Army of the Proletariat lingers We turn in to bed full of a live hope.

*March 6, 1940*

### **Police Zulum Begins : The Railwaymen's Rally**

To-day, the third day, has been very busy. The picketing went on as usual. The pickets take their places in the darkness before the dawn. But for this and the ubiquitous Lathi Police the mill area presents a holiday appearance. People in groups discussing men and things. Standing carelessly, rather rakishly, as if to say : "Who said we are afraid of this hare pack of blood-suckers the mill-owners! We will teach them yet. ..Just now no need to worry." In the evening, a women's rally at the maidan. At 4 o'clock about 10 to 15 thousand women collected. They had implicitly obeyed the Red Flag orders. They brought a huge basketful of playing cards. Com Ranadive speaks and extols them on the glorious role they were playing, warns them to be ever vigilant, never to relax, because those vampires, the maliks, would soon start their diabolical game of strike-breaking. Meanwhile, there is a huge rush of men on to the maidan. Thousands of people running on to the maidan, stopped as if by mechanism 20 yards from the women. They had come all

the way from DeLisle Road The men's meeting was scheduled to be held at DeLisle Road Maidan but the Sultan of Bombay had prohibited the use of a loud-speaker on that maidan, so the thousands that repaired to that maidan had to be deflected to the Kamgar Maidan And when thousands walk in the same direction they make a procession, whether they mean it or not That's what the Peeli Pagdi said when he arrested about 11 men, on a charge of forming a procession If they walked in the same direction, it is a procession if in opposite direction still it would look like an assembly and that is also prohibited Oh! for the day when the proletariat will pay this back!

After the speeches the big heap of playing cards is given a proper Hindu cremation Many of the workers were obviously inspired by the daring and resoluteness of the women Some among the men frowned They lost their playing cards Also the silent uncomplaining, ever-yielding wife The Lal Bavta educates

After the Joint Meeting of about 80,000, the Railwaymen meet on the same maidan About 15 000 Railway workers express their sympathy and support for the Textile Strike They condemn the Police Commissioner's "Firman" and threaten direct action if the question of Provident Fund and Wai-Allowance of 25% is not amicably settled

News comes that the Millowners reject Congress mediation Sadoba Patil in an interview with a Press Representative says that he congratulates the workers for carrying on the strike in such a peaceful manner and if they continue in the same peaceful way there is bound to be a settlement These are all a prey to a fanciful notion, a deliberate distortion The workers are violent without a reason Communists are believers in violence and so they teach workers (!) to indulge in violence

This strike will go down in History It demonstrates that the workers only retaliate violence for violence

*March 7, 1940*

**Madanpura Workers Answer Jinnah : The Red Flag Unites**

Notices have been put up in various mills that wages for February will be paid and should be taken within two days

The G.K.U. issues a leaflet warning the workers not to go into the mills to receive the wages It appeals to the jobbers not to assist the owners in braking the strike

David Sassoon Mill declares a lock-out. Much good that will do. Closing the stable door after the horse is gone. They had to lock up the mill anyway. The G.K.U. replies to S. K. Patil to the effect that workers are always prepared for a settlement.

There is a huge meeting of Muslim workers at Madanpura. They welcome Congress mediation. Poor Jinnah! His is a cry in the wilderness. The class-conscious Muslims know what is what. The Deliverance Day notwithstanding.

Chawl Committees are appointed for making proper bandobust.

The North Bombay Students are heroes. The G.S. Medical College Students passed a resolution unanimously to go out on a strike on the 11th to signify their support to the worker's strike.

To-day the Millowners' Association appeals to the Governor to intervene. Blind faith. The day passes off peacefully. The owners are adamant. So are the workers.

The B.P.C.C. will intervene if both parties desire it.

*March 8, 1940*

### **Resume Work or Face Eviction : A Challenge and the Answer**

Today the owners have started a new offensive. In those mill chawls the workers have been ordered to resume work or face eviction. Fools to think that such tactics will break the impregnable front.

Com. Dange issues a statement pointing out that their complaint before the Textile Inquiry Committee of the likelihood of such an offensive by owners is amply proved now. Such tactics show the panic of the owners despite all their bluster.

A volunteer of the G.K.U. was set upon and assaulted at Saitan Chowky. Presumably by some hireling of the owners. Workers never forget. When the time comes, the account will be settled.

Two volunteers are arrested near Khatau Makanji for shouting slogans.

In the evening again a monster meeting at Worli. Com. Ranadive moves a resolution against the arrest of Jaiprakash under the Defence of India Act. It is passed unanimously by 90,000 workers.

The Spinning mills have given wage cards to workers with a view to tempt them with a lump sum. Com. B.T. warns the workers not to fall for the bait. It is unnecessary. About four meetings are held during the morning at Kamgar Maidan, Shivaji Park, Lalbag and Madanpura.

About 200 hands had been working in the Turkey Rod Mills. Mahim About a hundred of them come out to-day The Alexandra Mills make a pretence of working A totally insignificant contingent of Jewish workers are taken in to-day Such things may deceive theres, not the workers They know

*March 9, 1940*

### **Murder At Kurla : Students Pledge Support**

Very bad news to-day At Kurla a striker who was exhorting people not to break the strike was stabbed by two hirelings Terrific tension in Kurla He is in the Hospital

At Ambemath the workers decide to participate in the General Strike when called The North Bombay Students Union congratulates the workers on their brave and united stand and promises support

A worker carrying a Red Flag was arrested to-day for contravening the Police fireman prohibiting carrying of sticks A stick, it seems, remains a sick even though a flag be attached So he is fined Rs 10 or a week in jail

Near Ranchhoddas Mills 6 workers have been arrested At the Morbag Mill the police indulged in a lathi charge They were feeling cramped and getting a wee-bit bored with waiting for hours They break the stalemate by breaking the bones of innocent workers

Three workers arrested The Police Commissioner extends his orders for a month

At a meeting of the Hotel Workers held at Hira Baug, they have resolved to go on strike tomorrow to signify their support for the strike

A few people have gone and accepted wages in spite of the Union's appeal They must be taught a lesson The Commissioner's order prohibits carrying sticks A brilliant idea! The workers develop a sudden love for sugarcane juice and each one of them buys a good solid sugarcane There's great merriment Now let the Pagarwallas come out We will give them a bit of sweet argumentation That should teach them

*March 10, 1940*

### **Hotel Workers' Solidarity Strike : Citizens Form Strike Relief Committee**

The end of the first week of the strike The Governor of Bombay has addressed a very apologetic question to the millowners, whether

they would be willing to consider the question of giving to the workers a share in such war profits as might be made in the future

The Hotel Workers' Strike is a complete success in Mandvi, Tamba Kanta etc. In Girgaum, hotels are working with reduced hands.

In the evening, a meeting at Kamgar Maidan. It is a Citizens' Meeting but the venue is such that the overwhelming majority are workers. N. M. Joshi presides. No less than three Muslim speakers support the strike and exhort the citizens of Bombay to generously aid the Bombay Citizen's Strike Committee which has just been formed. Mr. N. M. Joshi exhorts the workers to carry on the strike in the same united, peaceful and determined manner. It is the hope that the Bombay Municipal Corporation will donate at least a lac for strike relief as it did in 1928. Mr. Brelvi hopes that since the Congress has the majority in the Corporation, they would assign 2 lakhs at least for relief. Com. Nimbkar who has been too busy to attend meetings hereto speaks a few words, calling upon the workers to assemble in their thousands on Wednesday at the Azad Maidan. On Wednesday, the question of the strike is to be discussed in the Corporation. Let the voice of the workers be heard in the Corporation Hall.

*March 11, 1940*

### **Imperialism Strikes : Arrest of Dange, Ranadive and Mirajkar**

Imperialism has struck. To-day at 2 a.m. Comrades Dange, Ranadive and Mirajkar are arrested under the Defence of India Act. Police came like thieves in the night and took them away. Action has been taken under Rule 26. They are suspected of being concerned in activities which are likely to impede the efficient prosecution of the war or the Defence of India. Pompous nonsense to hide the dictatorship of British finance-capital. Com. Dange and Mirajkar had never made a single speech since August, long before the Chamberlain Daladier Governments declared war on Nazi Germany. They were prohibited from doing so by the conditions of their bail in the Phoenix Mill case, initiated by the Congress Minister, Mr. Munshi. These comrades are removed under cover of darkness. Our comrades who had been to the C.I.D. Office followed the Police Van and saw it leave Bombay. They must have been taken to Yerrowada or Thana. Com. Vimal Ranadive and Ushabai Dange are told that their spouses have been removed to Yerrowada.



'The gossip in the town is interesting "Sir Gilbert Wiles is a friend of Maloney" says one. Another says "They are out to break the strike and they will do it" Says the worker "Leaders may go but our strike continues"

Public opinion condemns the arrests. The North Bombay Students responded immediately by going on strike. About 3,000 students were on the streets as a protest against the arrests.

The Bombay Municipal Corporation adjourned without transacting business as a protest against the arrests. Only four persons, hirelings of the owners and adventurers refrained from voting for an adjournment.

In the evening, a meeting at DeLisle Road Maidan. It is a small maidan but 50,000 workers are packed like sardines. There is for the first time after many days, tenseness in the atmosphere, a grimness on the faces. The arrests shall not be allowed to interfere with the efficient prosecution of the strike.

More bad news. Com Shreepat Jagtap, the worker who was stabbed at Kurla, succumbed. A glorious addition to the list of Proletarian martyrs. Babu Maruti Papamiva, Parashuram Jadhava, Chawan and Jagtap, they have cemented the working class by their blood. Forward to the Day of Reckoning. Their deaths shall be avenged.

Com Jhambekar explains the significance of the arrests. These people have been consistently exposing the fraudulent protestation of Imperialism "A fight for Democracy" against Hitler "Self-determination of small nations", against Soviet Russia. Imperialism wants to kill two birds with one stone. Rid itself of these thorns in its side and also break the strike if it be possible. But the fight will go on with redoubled vigour. The workers will not allow their love for their leaders to abate the fight by one jot. 50,000 voices shout the deafening death-knell of British Imperialism. Miss Gokhale reminds the workers that when the time and day come, they have sufficient strength to tear down the Jail gates and rescue their beloved leaders.

At night, the Council of Action of the B P T U C met, condemned the arrests of the comrades and decided to call for a General Strike for one day as a protest against these arrests.

The B P C C sends a letter to the G K Union suggesting arbitration as the only way out of the impasse.

To-day the Millowners met in the Annual General Meeting of their Association. Their meeting was beautifully timed. Mr. Baddely, the chairman, conscious of the changed conditions spoke out his mind. He thundered against the leaders of the Red Flag Union that their malign influence has reduced the Textile Industry to a miserable plight. He pointed out how the Millowners have been consistently shouldering the burden of losses year after year. If they were running the mills at all, it was purely out of humanitarian considerations. He said that the 10% Dear Food Allowance was the last straw and they would not be prepared to pay a pie more.

His speech failed to convince the people. Too selfless to be true.

Nimbkar gave the answer. He said "that there is no question of workers agreeing to resume work till every pie demanded by them is given by the employers."

Mr. Baddely is seeing stars.

*March 12, 1940*

### **Raising The Tempo : Bhayyas Rally Under Red Flag**

There is too much lazing and very little of the strike tension in the mill area. This is dangerous, definitely so. This strike has been born out of conciliation proceedings and it seems to carry with it the taint of birth. There is no tempo, no militancy. A great unity no doubt but rather colourless. The tempo must be raised. The Millowners issue a statement that 10,000 workers have taken their wages for February. No grain of salt here, you want a ton. A more blatant falsehood you have never heard. It is true that some workers, not more than a thousand, received their wages, but they came out after doing so. And some of them repented for their rashness, for disregard of discipline. A stick though sweet hurts.

In the evening a meeting of Bhayya Textile workers. Com. Nimbkar, Bukhari, Zulmiram speak : "The Bhayyas have all along been called strike-breakers. You have not co-operated with the other workers in previous strikes. This time you have demonstrated your desire for unity. Keep the flag flying. Do not yield to beautiful promises of the owner or his hireling. This unity carried forward means success in the strike, means winning the first step to national independence.

Late in the evening a new Strike Committee of the G.K.U. is

formed Com Nimbkar as Secretary. Com Deshpande and Nagarkar Three more are added Com Vaidya, Bakshi and Godavari Gokhale

*March 13 1940*

### **The Corporation Rally : Soviet Raj Zindabad**

The Soviet-Finnish Pact is signed Another kick in the pants for Chamberlain, Daladier & Co The strike situation as usual Picketing at mill gates Residential quarters bustling with life After all it is once in a long while one gets an opportunity for resting one's tired limbs And they rest, with them the strike spirit rests too Too bad

In the evening, Corporation Meeting and close by about 60,000 workers have bugged a long distance and assembled They want to know what the City Fathers have to say to their starving children The Congress resolution suggesting that the Mayor should impress upon both parties the urgent need for some settlement After Baddely's speech, this was futile Still that is all the fathers had to say Com Deshpande in his speech emphasised the integral connection between this struggle for bread and the larger struggle for freedom He warns the Government and the owners that the workers have strength enough to give a fitting reply to their repression when the time comes He referred to the Soviet-Finnish Pact and pointed out how the foreign policy of the Soviet Union is checkmating the Allied Imperialist gangsters Terrific roar of "Victory to Soviet Russia" Who says the workers do not know anything in politics! The Millowners' Association issues a statement daily To-day they claim 17,600 workers received their wages The report of the Millowners' gains is on a par with the report of Russian losses on the Finnish Front

*March 14 1940*

### **Kisan Greetings : Women Bolsheviks at Kamgar Maidan : Arrest of Comrade Oak**

Swami Sahajanand sends greetings to the Bombay workers and congratulates them on the excellent courage, spirit, grit and organisational capacity displayed not only by the workers but also by the leaders

In the evening a mass meeting of women at Kamgar Maidan They assemble to address a monster petition to the Government demanding the immediate release of their beloved leaders

They have given the slogan : "Our Beloved Leaders. Release them!" And they want to carry it through. The women are marvellous. So charming even in their militancy. A woman worker gives the slogan in a high tremolo : "Lal Bavta Ki Jai". All the women take it up. Their voices ring out clear and gentle like silver bells. When they clap, how delicate and picturesque! They raise both their hands over their heads and clap. It is an exquisite sight. Thousands of hands going up in perfect unison. A thousand sopranos shouting revolutionary slogans.

An old woman worker Sundaribai exhorts them to carry forward the struggle. "Do not hesitate" she says. "I am old. I have not many days to live but I go with you. Let us determine not to allow anybody to make a breach in the strike front. Resolve to get our leaders released". Terrific enthusiasm all round. She is a born agitator. Before the audience knows how, they find themselves answering her questions. "Do you want your Mahagai Bhatta?" Yes, they answer. "Do you want your beloved leaders?" Yes, of course, they shout. "Then carry on the struggle and don't worry about anything else."

The women have come out with their own slogans. They have braved the Police Lathis, the prison-cell, the separation from their dear little babies. But they go without a regret, THE VANGUARD OF THE STRIKE.

The men meet at Sewri. We go to Sewri. The venue of the meeting is a small plot of open space bounded by the road on one side. On either side of the road are two fair-sized hillocks. The loudspeaker is a blessing. The workers have gone up the hills and are sitting all along the sides and top. It is a grand skyline. Hundreds of workers silhouetted against the setting sun. Com. Deshpande in his speech again refers to the Soviet-Finnish Pact, the policy of the allied imperialists, British Imperialist repression, its attempt to stem the rising force of revolution. Witness the arrests of leaders. "But the mighty giant is awake now. It won't be long before he shatters White Imperialism and its prop and support Brown capitalism". In the evening after this meeting, the Bombay Civil Liberties Union meets and passes a resolution condemning the prohibitory orders of the Commissioner, the arrests of Com. Ranadive, Dange and Mirajkar and demands their immediate release.

Late at night Com. Oak is arrested under the Defence of India Act in respect of a speech delivered by him on the 26th January, the Independence Day.

*March 15, 1940*

### **Mahagai Demand Spreads : Class Front Widens : Arrest of Com. Deshpande**

Com. Oak is put up before the Presidency Magistrate Mr. Brown. Chari, our Defence Lawyer makes an application for bail. The Magistrate asks him to have a glance at the extracts from the speech. The speech is a usual one saying that British Imperialism has kept India in slavery for nearly a hundred and fifty years. That there is no hope for this country to progress unless imperialism is overthrown. Chari tells the magistrate that there is nothing unusual in the speech. That it is what every Indian feels and has said for the last fifty years at least. "But in time of war", says the Magistrate, "this kind of speech should not be permitted." The Lawyer replies: "There is no reason why in time of war patriotism should be extolled in an Englishman and condemned in an Indian". Bail is allowed on condition Com. Oak does not make speeches pending his trial, does not attend meetings where such speeches are likely to be made.

The Millowners have spurned the Congress offer of mediation. Arrogantly they say : There can be no question of our agreeing to pay a pie more than we have already offered for peace". The reply to this was given by a woman worker. Asked how long she thought the workers would be able to hold out, she said : "We have to suffer very much during a strike. But we have to suffer even when there is no strike. Only it is more now. The swine of a Malak loses a hundred times more than we do. We shall see who yields first."

In the afternoon, middle-class women hold a meeting in the Jinnah Hall compound. About two thousand women workers trudge a distance of six miles to attend. A resolution is passed expressing sympathy and support for the strike. The old woman worker Sundarabi is extremely diplomatic. Speaking in the Congress House compound, she took the opportunity of thanking the Congress for introducing prohibition.

The strike has caught on. The workers in the silk and woollen mills are on strike for War Allowance. Godrej Soap workers are also on strike and they pass a resolution condemning Com. Oak's arrest. The soap workers in their rally at Madanpura and the Tramwaymen at Shivaji Park decide to observe the 18th as a

**Protest Strike against the arrests of Labour Leaders.** Timber and Saw-mill workers and those in various other industries are following the lead given by the Textile workers and are demanding Dearness Allowance. Even the Teachers of the Secondary Schools of Bombay mustered strength to demand 25% War Allowance

In the evening at the Servants of India Society, the Strike Relief Committee meets. Mr. Brelvi and Mr. Ashok Mehta say that the Committee should adjourn sine die till the negotiations by the Mayor terminate. More delay and dilatory tactics. The motion is opposed vehemently. There is enough misery as it is. Why wait till that uncertain day? People want to know what the Committee is doing. In fact many of them send in money, even though the committee has not started functioning. On the 11th evening, a young man, a clerk, is very disturbed by the arrests of the labour leaders. He is worried as to its effect on the strike. He is assured by comrades that the working class can and will produce any number of leaders to fill the breach. He hands over ten rupees, for any purpose in furtherance of the strike **THE STRIKE HAS TOUCHED ALL CLASSES.**

The Executive Committee of the B B. & C. I Railway workers Union and the workers' meeting at Worli both condemn the arrest of Com. Oak. A worker is arrested for carrying a flag.

The imperialist offensive goes on. Com. Deshpande is arrested at the G.K.U. Office under the Defence of India Act and removed. The K.E.M. Hospital Employees' Union at its General Body Meeting passes a resolution condemning the arrest of Comrades Ranadive, Dange, Mirajkar and Deshpande.

Mrs. Deshpande makes frantic pilgrimages to all the police stations to hand over clothes and bedding to her husband. No trace. Police refuse information. Returns home at 2 a.m.

*March 16, 1940*

### **Imperialist Offensive Continues : Arrest of Parulekar**

Mr. S. V. Parulekar of the Servants of India Society and a member of the Council of Action is arrested under the Defence of India Act. Com. Deshpande has already been removed to Yerawada. The clothes and bedding can't be given after all. The strike situation is much as usual, with women to the fore.

*March 17, 1940*

**Workers are the Vanguard of National Army ! Communist Party Zindabad !**

Tomorrow is the General Strike About three lacs workers are expected to down tools as a protest against the arrests of labour leaders All the shops are to be closed Swift preparations are going on Chawl Committees and workers' groups are busy going round rallying support and making bandobust for tomorrow

The Madanpura workers say "Don't worry about this end, there has not been a single strike-breaker among us. Mussalmans nor will be Tomorrow it will be a complete hartal Wait and see"

From about 2 p m groups of workers, women and men wend their way towards Chowpatty There is a meeting there timed to begin at 6 p m They are already there Trudging six miles wearily to make the citizens of this area alive to tomorrow's protest hartal

At 6 p m an assembly of 80,000 people on Chowpatty Resolutions condemning the arrests and exhorting the citizens to co-operate with the workers in tomorrow's protest hartal Com Jhambekar makes the best speech of the day He draws attention to the fact that the Ramgarh Congress is meeting He says "British Imperialism, we were told, is a fierce lion It is a very old and weak lion, eaten up and rotten with internal disease It has fallen into the pit of war It asks us to pull it out Our national leaders stand round the pit and say they are prepared to do it, provided the lion gives an assurance that it will give up its taste for human flesh and leave them unharmed Ridiculous The only thing for them to do is to throw huge boulders on the lion and bury it deep And instead they are dallying, vacillating, doing everything but the right thing Imperialism finds itself in a quandary It attacks the people of India, the workers of Bombay It arrests the labour leaders, it wants to break the strike and demoralise the people But shall that happen? Never, a lakh and 60 thousand workers of Bombay have given the lead The workers of Cawnpore, Calcutta, Sholapur, Amalner, Madras and Coimbatore will follow The proletariat will give the answer to the imperialist offensive" For the first time in so many days, the tempo is raised to great heights A deafening roar of "Victory to working class unity!", "Long live the Communist Party of India!" and "Long live the Soviet Union!"

Com. Jambhekar proceeds : "The Soviet-Finnish Treaty has prevented an extension of the war front. Chamberlain and Daladier, the Imperialist brigands, will have now to fight Hitler without allies. They are quaking in their shoes. They feel that the Indian people are likely to give trouble, so they strike first so as to decimate the forces of struggle. But the workers of Bombay who are fighting for 25% war allowance will also be in the forefront of the struggle for the overthrow of British Imperialism. Let us make this declaration, for the benefit of our national leaders at Ramgarh. "Down with Imperialism!" Com. Bukhari thunders against Imperialism. Tomorrow's hartal must demonstrate the unity of the people. It is preparation for the impending national struggle. Every citizen must discharge his duty and make tomorrow's strike a complete success.

After the meeting, the women workers proceed towards Gowalia Tank. They are in a procession. They are stopped by the Police. The women are not daunted. "Give us but the word", they cry, "and we shall break through this wall of corpses. We shall not yield. We shall not turn back." Terrific militancy. They are the same women who seeing Mrs. Dange with tear-laden eyes said : "Sister, give us but the word. We shall do anything. We shall foot to Yerawada and batter down the gates and bring you back your husband." They are not of mere flesh and blood. They are of steel and wrought-iron. The leaders are anxious, there might be a clash and in the mood in which the women are, it is bound to be a serious clash. They warn the police that unless these women are allowed to proceed in a procession to Prarthana Samaj, there will be trouble; the Police look at the women and agree. The women don't. They insist on going forward. Entreaties finally prevail and they go in procession to Prarthana Samaj from whence to Lal Baug by tram, shouting slogans at the top of their voices all along the route. If all the men on strike were equally vigilant and militant! Has not Com. Nimbkar every day been talking about negotiations for settlement by the Congress, by the Mayor and others? The millowners are adamant. In such circumstances, this persistent emphasis will only demoralise, weaken and in the end disrupt, the strike. The atmosphere is much too optimistic about a settlement. One ceases to be vigilant. One does not realise that this strike will have to be fought to the bitter end. Herein lies the danger. The men are as yet taking it easy. It is the strike-breakers' paradise.



*March 18 1940*

### **The Great Protest Hartal in Bombay : More Than Three Lacs Out on the Streets**

The Day of the General Strike Railway workers have come out partially The Litho presses in the middle districts of Khetwadi Girgaum, Mandvi Market and Tardeo are all closed The Bombay Soap, Tata Oil, Swastik Oil, Persian Soap factories are empty In the G I P Railway Workshop nearly a thousand workers are on Hartal Sixty per cent of the workers in the Loco shed of the B B & C I have remained away as a demonstration of protest against the arrests of labour leaders All the silk factories in the City are closed down The protest strike is a grand success even in Kurla and Thana All the factories, woollen and rice, are closed All the grocers and other shop-keepers have voluntarily closed their shops, except the privileged Iranee More than three lakhs of people are out on the streets In Madanpura, all the Hotel-keepers have closed their shops A police officer goes up and gets hold of an owner of a hotel by the scruff of his neck and says "Is your father dead? Why have you closed your shop? Go and open it forthwith" The owner says "I am not feeling well, my boys are all on strike" Police fury is let loose to terrorise the workers A group of tiny tots between the ages of five and nine studying in the Municipal School at DeLisle Road are on strike too The brave gang walks the streets proudly shouting at the top of their voices 'Lal Bavte Ki Jai', "Sarvatrik Sampacha Vijay Aso!", "Victory to the General Strike" This infuriates a Police officer—a white man He rushes forward assaults the little kids, and disperses them Some of the children are badly injured North Bombay, the streets look deserted, except for the police who are swarming about the place Lorry-loads of armed police patrolling, huge parties of lathi police stationed at every fifty yards The people have responded magnificently Students, children, shop-keepers, hotel workers, soap workers, everybody had demonstrated his protest against the arrests of labour leaders Imperialism has lost the first round It had thought it could isolate the Communists by trying to frighten the people with its pompous declaration of policy, the people replied, they rallied round the Communists Imperialist repression is let loose Fiftyeight persons are arrested, during the course of the day In the evening, a meeting of ninety thousand at the Kamgar Maidan

reviews the successful hartal and condemns the Police zoolom Strong speeches are made against the police and a threat is held out that the workers' patience is getting well-nigh exhausted. When the meeting disperses, hundreds of people cross the junction at Poi-Bawdi wending their way homewards. Never the ghost of an idea of forming a 'procession'. The Police lathi-charge. They say it is a procession. Several persons are severely injured. At Elphinstone Bridge, workers going homewards find their way blocked by a police party. A small passage sufficient to allow just two abreast is kept open. As each worker goes through, he is severely assaulted Those who bleed profusely are arrested, lest they complain. Charge against them is that they shouted slogans They never shouted.

At Poibawdi again Mr. N. V. Phadke, a member of the Council of Action appointed by the T.U.C. and the Managing Committee of the G.K.U. while on his way to the Damodar Hall is collared by Inspector Paul. He is asked to go in the opposite direction He refuses to do anything of the kind and says he is going to the Hall He is arrested and taken to the Bhoiwada Police Station. Charge against him is that he caused obstruction to the traffic. A ridiculous and false charge. At Lal Baug, workers returning home are beaten severely by the Police. The havaladar gives the reason. He says . "Sala, for your sake we have been on duty from 4 o'clock this morning. Take this!" And he hits hard and long The workers collapse Hundreds of instances like this to-day. Is this provocation to rouse retaliation? Will the workers do it?

Nevertheless, a magnificent hartal, and a fitting reply to the challenge of Imperialism.

Picketing has been maintained at the mill gates as usual. At Apollo Mill 20 women pickets have been sitting for nearly 8 hours It is 1 p.m. A woman worker feels tired and hungry. She complains loudly that she cannot get her cheap Hindu tea. The hotels are closed. Only the Irancee is open and his tea costs an anna. Much, too much. An Indian Police Officer guarding the mill-gate close by listens. He pulls out a two-anna bit, gives it to the woman and says : "Go and have some tea at the Irancee". The worker woman treasures the nickel bit. The tea can wait. Meanwhile the nickel is a souvenir. It is an unspoken promise for the future. In the evening, this woman goes round at the meeting gladly and proudly showing the nickel bit to everybody. She did not have her tea after all.

## INDIA TO-DAY

R. Page Arnot

THE VICEROY, on August 8th, once more offered to sell a pig in a poke to the people of India. There were no buyers. The Indian National Congress, which, at the 1937 elections, despite the restricted electorate and heavily-rigged arrangements for privileged constituencies, nevertheless obtained an overwhelming majority, is not so easily to be duped. Indeed, the British Government, which authorised the Viceroy to make his statement, can hardly have expected to get from India any response, apart from the ready applause of its own clients and confidants. Nor can they have been altogether surprised when the Muslim president of the Indian National Congress, Maulana Kalam Asad, coldly declined to enter the game. From the impudent opening claim that "India's anxiety at this moment of critical importance in the world struggle against tyranny and aggression to contribute to the full to the common cause and to the triumph of our common ideas is manifest", to the flowery statement of "the intentions of His Majesty's Government", the device was altogether too transparent. These intentions turn out to be a reiteration of the "full weight" which British Imperialism will lend to any minority to thwart the decisions of the majority of the Indian people; the "revision" (which may mean on the precedent of the Simon Commission, either extension or restriction) of the present "constitution" by some third and presumably hand-picked Round Table—provided always that safeguards are maintained for and by the British Imperialists; and that in any case this must all be put off till after the war. Negatively, this means the rejection of the Congress demands for unequivocal recognition of national independence, for self-determination, for the future of India to be decided by a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, and for immediate setting up of a National Government with ministers responsible to elected bodies. The Indian National Congress in the

last ten months had asked the British Government to define its intentions towards India: in order that the Indians might judge of the claim that this war was being waged for democracy and freedom. Through the mouth of the Viceroy the reply is hereby given and the Congress leaders are now invited to behave like their predecessors in the war of 1914-18, in return for which they are informed that the principle of "divide and rule" will continue to be operated, that they had better drop their present programme, and that they would do well to accept a post-dated cheque for a new constitutional scheme, "after the war".

In these circumstances, the reason for the Viceroy's statement, followed by the parliamentary debate of August 15th, must be looked upon as the preparation of public opinion at home and in the U.S.A. for the further steps the Government will take to deal with the Congress and the whole liberation movement of the Indian people. Already there have been many arrests, especially of leaders of the Indian working class: and new repressive ordinances (e.g. against defence volunteers) have been issued. Moreover, as Jawaharlal Nehru stated in a recent telegram, the closing of the Burma Road to China (with other steps for the appeasement of Japanese Imperialism), is directly opposed to the interests of the Indian people, who have expressed their solidarity with the people of China. Talk of "common ideals" cannot hide this conflict of interests; and in it there lies a threat for the future. But British public opinion, as voiced in the press, as well as the debate in Parliament, appeared to accept without question the Government statements. The press telegrams to India will say that there is "unanimity" behind the Government and the possibility of friendship between the peoples of Britain and India that could develop from an acceptance of the Congress programme will be made more remote. This is a prospect full of peril for the people of this country: and the sooner there is an awakening to this danger and a widespread understanding of India to-day, the sooner the working class and the people of this country will be in a position to solve their own problems.

Precisely at this time the publication of R. Palme Dutt's book on India gives everyone the opportunity of acquiring a full understanding, a criterion by which to judge vice-regal statements and an equipment for participating in the struggle for Colonial

liberation, as part of the real "common cause" of the working class and the oppressed peoples against Imperialism

*India To-day* is the most important book about it since the time the peoples of India first became subject to the domination of the British capitalists

It is the best book written in this country on the Colonial Question. It is a profound Marxist study that lays bare the working of Imperialism.

So far, its reception at the hands of reviewers in the Capitalist press has been in inverse proportion to its importance. Handed out to the readers of the Left Book Club on a pair of tongs by Professor Laski, the ideologist of the Labour Party Executive Committee (odd resemblance between the churchmen who "edited" Gibbon to minimise the damage his history might do to their altars and Laski's careful attempt at "decontamination" in the Left News) it has since—apart from one or two hostile notices—received scarcely a single serious review. Under the circumstances of the present war threatening to involve the whole of mankind, it is noteworthy that the best Marxist work in Western Europe for many a year should be met by a conspiracy of silence. All the more then the working class of the English-speaking countries should make up their minds to get this book and equip themselves from it.

The book falls into five main parts, together with a preliminary chapter on India in the War and a sixth part drawing conclusions as to the future. In Part I, *India as it Is and as it Might Be*, there is presented the problem of India: the 370,000,000 human beings, living in extreme poverty, under a foreign rule which maintains by force the social system, and struggling for the means of life, for elementary freedom. The facts are those admitted by Imperialists that "after two centuries of imperialist rule, India presents a spectacle of squalid poverty and misery of the mass of the people without equal in the world". Nor is it deficiency of resources that explains this, nor long-lasting historic backwardness (for up till the British capitalists came, India was relatively advanced in the world scale of technical development), nor any other specious reason. Citations from imperialist apologists themselves lead to the conclusion that "it is this failure to develop the productive resources of India that finally sounds the death-knell of imperialism in India to-day", and the necessary transformation, depending on the national movement,

on the working masses and especially on the young working class, while having as its first objective the liberation from Imperialism, has then the further issue of the ending of poverty. Before this can be set forth in full, there are necessary sections dealing with the "Silent censorship" over India and the mythologies ("White Man's burden" in all keys) conjured up by the imperialists and spread by them in this country through every agency of propaganda. In Chapter 3 the terrible paradox of the wealth of India and the poverty of India is followed by a complete exposure of the over-population fallacies, the fantastic nonsense solemnly put forward about the "devastating torrent of Indian babies" in a country whose population increase lags behind Britain. In Chapter 4 there is squarely given the contrast between two worlds, socialism in the U.S.S.R. and imperialism in India over two decades, together with a particular contrast of the Central Asian Republics, where almost everything in the past conditions under the Tsar's viceroy was strictly comparable with Hindustan a few hundred miles to the south, and where their present position gives a glimpse of India as it might be.

The need of this first part may be illustrated by the British reader from his own experience. To every school-child the story of the "Black Hole of Calcutta" as the Origin and Justification of British rule in India, is nearly as familiar as the Norman Conquest, while it is not one in ten thousand who would know of the Moplah death train of 1921. But the "Black Hole" never occurred. It is a myth, an invented war-atrocity, a lie which does not take on any aspect of truth by its repetition for over a century and half or by being taught to little children.

The atrocious suffocation of the Moplah prisoners of British Imperialism, on the other hand, is something that did take place, and less than 20 years ago: but it finds no mention in the school-books. Even when Holwell's monument commemorating the imaginary "Black Hole"<sup>5</sup> was removed two months ago by the Bengal Government from a main thoroughfare of Calcutta because it "offended the susceptibilities" of the inhabitants. *The Times* left it to be inferred that the people of Bengal were unduly sensitive about an episode in their own history and no hint was given that British rule in India came with a lie, or that it was the British who should have felt shame.

In Part II, *British Rule in India* an historical analysis reveals the secret of Indian poverty, and therewith discusses the reason for the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century primacy of British capitalism and the course of ruling class politics. An examination of the fertile thoughts of Marx on India is followed by a statement of the stages of exploitation from the policy of plunder under John Company to the exploitation of a market for goods with the industrial devastation of Hindustan and from that to the present stage of finance capital, whose stranglehold is expressed in constitutional form in the Government of India Act of 1935. A hundred facts refute the "industrialisation" fallacy. The argument goes deep and the reader may understand from it not only the complex that is India-England but the whole question of imperialism and the subject peoples, can see wider horizons and come to grasp the last century and a half of world history. *British Rule in India* confirms the Communist International thesis on the National and Colonial question.

Of particular importance for the British reader is the exposition in Part III of the *Basic Problem of India: the Agrarian Problem*. Here is not only a clear statement of the process of growing agrarian crisis, the over-pressure of the population on agriculture, due to the continuing "de-industrialisation" of the Indian colony, the stagnation and deterioration of agriculture, the land-hunger of the peasantry, with dwarfish, fragmented and ever-smaller holdings, the whole falling more and more into the maw of absentee landlords, the crushing burden of debt, the expropriation of the peasantry. These developments which have gone on with the remorseless movement of a natural process, which the imperialist rulers of India cannot end without ending their own rule, are now shown to have increased their speed in recent years. Twenty years ago the landless peasants were reckoned at one-fifth of the whole, to-day *at one-half*. Out of this abyss there is no rescue save in the shape of Agrarian Revolution, and Chapter 9 ("The Burdens on the Peasantry") in its closing sentences sounds the prelude to Agrarian Revolution.

"Carlyle described the situation of the French peasantry on the eve of the Great Revolution in a famous passage:

*The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner, a perfumed seigneur, delicately lunging in the Oeil de Bœuf, has*

*an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law.*

A more mysterious alchemy has been achieved to-day in British India. "One nettle is left for the peasant: two nettles are gathered for the seigneur".

Parts II and III, showing the two axes of change in India, the national struggle for liberation from British rule and the oncoming of Agrarian Revolution, give the basis for Part IV, *The Indian People in Movement* (the rise of Indian Nationalism, the three stages of national struggle, and the rise of Labour and Socialism) and Part V, *The Battleground in India To-day*. To discuss these two parts together with the conclusions in Part VI would require a full treatment in relation to the new developments in India, and the present world situation. Enough has been said to indicate the scope of "India To-day", which becomes the indispensable equipment of every revolutionary. For no one who sees the need of a social transformation can afford to neglect the study of this book or fail to gain from its passion of revolutionary thought an understanding and a stimulus for action.



## THE CRISIS IN INDIA

Michael Carritt

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN INDIA? The most elaborate smoke screen of confusion is being put up in Fleet Street. With exaggerated contortions the experts on India create their own picture of the "Indian Problem" and then proceed either to apply their own home-made remedies or to declare the problem insoluble. Mr Amery, rising from his seat at one of his frequent official lunch parties, proclaims the slogan of "India First" and himself as the saviour of India; he claims that he alone can see what is good for India at a time when all her leaders have been found wanting.

Confusion in the minds of the British people as to the real nature of issues in India is understandable in the light of the contradictory nonsense spoken and written about India in bourgeois circles. *Great Britain and the East*, an "authoritative" journal on Empire affairs, declares on one page through the mouthpiece of Miss Cornelia Sorabjee (an energetic propagandist of Sir John Anderson's regime in Bengal), that India remains steadfast in her loyalty to the Empire save for a few Communists, terrorists and other political criminals. A few pages later Sir Alfred Watson, at one time editor of the *Calcutta Statesman*, discovers that after all India so not united behind the war effort, that the various communities are all at sixes and sevens, and that whatever the British Government may mean by its offer to form a National Government in India, it would be impossible for the Viceroy to take into his Cabinet "men who were pledged to sabotage" India's war effort—that is representatives of the Indian National Congress. He admits that if India got a real National Government, democratically elected, she would "go out of the war tomorrow."

In similar vein, whilst Mr Amery is boasting in the House of Commons that India is morally in support of the British war effort, his own Governor in Madras is forced to issue a strong warning to those who are "sneering at war funds and poisoning the minds of the people." And it is reported from the United Provinces that

“the volume of anti-war speeches continues unabated” (*Calcutta Statesman*, September 27th).

In suits the imperialists to run this double line of propaganda: on the one hand to create an impression of 380 million freedom-loving people supporting Britain's war against Germany, and on the other an India so disunited, disorderly and generally intractable that at the present time the people are incapable of managing their own affairs even if they were given the chance to do so.

With the prospect of a long and exhausting war ahead, British imperialism is faced with the urgent necessity of mobilizing the vast material and human resources of India for its war effort. This was apparent from the day war broke out; it is a hundred times more clearly so today when the Near East is already ablaze and when the German sea and air blockade is making a dispersal of war industries imperative.

In a world where all could be foreseen (declares the *Calcutta statesman*). —India would be able to relieve Britain of much of her responsibility for the Mediterranean front. She is the great reservoir of man-power and raw materials for Asia, Africa and the Southern hemisphere. But India is quite unprepared for the taking over of such responsibilities.

Echoing these imperialist sentiments, Mr. Vernon Bartlett says in the House of Commons:

*Whereas Great Britain must be the centre from which we fight the war West of Gibraltar, India would be the centre from which we fight the war East of Suez. We cannot afford a breakdown in India.*

Lord Strabolgi, speaking for the Labour Party in the House of Lords, also agrees with the imperialists:

*If India's man-power can be mobilised we need have no fear of threats to the Straits Settlements and Burma, and in certain circumstances great help could be sent to Indo-China.*

Thus Tories, “Progressive” and Labour Party get together in agreement to mobilise Indian resources for the purpose of protecting the vested interests of Empire in the Mediterranean, Africa and the Far East. And, of course, they are all perfectly clear that this Indian mobilisation for the protection of the Empire is incompatible with Indian independence. The Tories are at least frank about it: Independence in any real meaning of the word is ruled out by world conditions. (*Great Britain and the East*, Nov. 28, 1940.)

The Labour Party propagandists are a little less frank. They say that it is necessary to "satisfy India", but some idea of what they mean by satisfaction can be gathered from various proposals, such as those outlined in *The New Statesman* of December 14th. It would appear that it is imperialism rather than Indian demands that are to be satisfied, for we find (1) the mediation of the Moderates, Sapru and Jayakar, is welcomed, (2) that a new Constitution is promised *after the war*, and (3) that Dominion Status, not independence, is assumed to be the goal of Indian ambitions.

Further evidence is forthcoming of just how little the Labour leaders differ from the Tory Imperialists and just how little serious they are when they talk about India presenting a "test" of their socialist sincerity. In December nine members of Parliament signed an appeal to India—an appeal directed towards winning Indian co-operation in the Empire's war effort. In this appeal two prominent Labour members, as well as Mr. Vernon Bartlett, were associated with six Tories. Sir John Wardlaw-Milne was one of the Tory signatories. He is a Director of the Bombay, Baroda and Central Indian Railway and a Director of the Bank of Bombay. Before the war he was a supporter of the *Anglo-German Review*, the official organ of "The Link."

The message sent by this mixed bag of parliamentarians is a masterpiece of diplomatic obscurity—it declares the "wish" of the British people to see India "free", but it reminds the Indian people that Britain has certain obligations (namely to the Princes and to such vested interests as Sir John Wardlaw-Milne himself represents.) Finally, as a *quid pro quo*, it calls for unconditional support for the war effort. "Democracy" and "Freedom", carefully left as undefined wishes, are held up as the glittering rewards to be enjoyed *after the war* in return for co-operation in the fight to preserve the Empire *now*.

But there is no need to argue the point further. The Labour Party's complicity in the refusal of freedom and democracy to India is clearly exposed in a letter from Transport House to Mr. Krishna Menon, Secretary of the India League and one-time Labour candidate for Dundee, in which it is stated that the Labour leaders are sure that

you (i.e. Mr. Menon) would not claim that, owing to your natural

allegiance to India. you can give full support to Labour Party policy.

The all-Party drive towards the mobilization of India's war potential has encouraged in recent months a spate of "suggestions" from imperialist quarters to the effect that Mr. Amery and the Viceroy would do well to cut out any further waste of time in trying to negotiate with the Congress "irreconcilables" and get down to the business of mobilization by means of all the special powers that rest in the hands of the bureaucracy. In actual fact this advice is hardly necessary; the Viceroy has been no laggard, since the days preceding the outbreak of the war, in taking the steps necessary to mobilize Indian war effort even against the will of the people. The speed with which action was taken is an indication that Imperialism was well aware of the deep gulf separating it from the people.

1. The Viceroy was given special executive powers, overriding the Provincial Legislatures, in the event of an "emergency"

2. A Defence of India Act and Regulations were placed on the Statute Book without even the formality of discussion with the Provincial Governments who would be responsible for administering them

3. Indian troops were sent abroad against the expressed wishes of the Indian people, and India was declared belligerent without any consultation.

4. On the resignation of the Congress Ministries in protest against these actions, no attempt was made to form alternative Governments from the elected representatives, but the administration was taken over by the bureaucracy

5. Leading Trade Unionists, Peasant Leaders, Congress Socialists and Radical Moslems were arrested and shut away with or without trial. In an official communique the Government declared its intention of interning all Communists it could lay hands upon. Sixty per cent of the arrests were of working class and peasant workers. Students were given savage sentences of 18 months for possession of Communist literature. And now, in recent months, we have the arrest of Nehru and other leading Congressmen including the President, Abul Kalam Azad.

6. Up to July, 1940, 93 newspapers had been penalized and about £10,000 demanded as security for "good behaviour"

without any judicial proceedings. In the words of the Indian Civil Liberties Union: New interpretations, calculated further to abridge the rights of the people, are being given to obscure sections of the Indian Press Act. Printing presses have become terror-stricken and they have often refused to print even notices for convening public meetings, let alone the most innocuous documents.

7 A Body of Civic Guards has been formed, over 5,000 strong in Calcutta alone, one of whose main duties according to official instructions is to preserve order in cases of communal or industrial trouble. Its first important activity was to help break the strike of Calcutta municipal scavengers and to protect the blacklegs.

8 Towards the end of 1940 a measure of industrial conscription was introduced by Viceregal Ordinance imposing compulsory national service upon certain categories of skilled technicians.

But these methods of repression, familiar in the Police State, and essential for the mobilisation of a people that is opposed to the war, are negative in character. They amount to a progressive repudiation of democracy in India, a repudiation which it might have been thought would have been embarrassing to those who still professed to believe that the war was being fought for democratic ideals. But they are of no avail to overcome difficulties of another type that stand in the way of the British plan to mobilise India.

For India to become the spearhead of Britain's military power in the East, it is necessary to expand the Indian Army to a force between 1 and 1¼ million strong. The equipment of a modern army requires the manufacture of some 40,000 articles, some simple and others of an extremely complex and delicate nature. At present India does not produce more than half of these required items of equipment—and, it may be assumed, the less complicated half. It is out of the question for equipment to be provided from England under existing conditions, on the contrary, the hope has been expressed that India will in time be able to equip other than Indian forces in the Middle East.

But war industries cannot be built up in a day—and all the less so when it happens to be in a country maintained for 180 years in a state of poverty and illiteracy by an imperialism which regards India as a huge raw-material producing appendage of its own

industrial system. Heavy industry is in its infancy in India: engineering hardly exists outside a few Government Ordnance factories: less than 1 per cent of the population is employed in industry proper: capital investment is for the most part foreign. machinery for industry has been imported from England up to the outbreak of the war, after which it has fallen off.

The Delhi Conference of the Far Eastern Groups of the Empire was called to overcome these difficulties. The Indian "representatives", unlike those from the Dominions, were a purely official panel selected by the imperialist power. It is fairly clear that none of the other countries represented will be in a position to supply the technical and material assistance required for developing war production in India. The only solution is for America to supply the machinery and the capital, and, in fact, a start has already been made in this direction. The Government of India has announced that it is "actively interested in a scheme for establishing an aircraft factory in India with American assistance" (*Great Britain and the East*, January 2nd, 1941). At the same time it is reported that the assembly of automobile parts and later perhaps their manufacture may be started by an American firm in India. Having thus acquired a foothold, the American capitalists will endeavour to widen the breach, confident in the knowledge that for the time being only they can deliver the goods.

This poaching by Dollar Imperialism within its rival's preserves sharply accentuates the contradictions that are inherent in the policy, born of dire necessity, of building up war industries in India. It would be a mistake to speak of the "industrialisation of India" as is being glibly done by the imperialists; what is happening is no more than the limited development of war industries—a very different thing from the planned industrialisation of a country on the basis of its natural resources and for the satisfaction of its social needs. Moreover, according to *Great Britain and the East*, we learn that the Government has discovered "certain peculiar difficulties connected with the release of the dollar exchange and the availability of machinery". Further....."The Government would only feel justified in giving support to the scheme [for automobile manufacture, M. C.] If it could be shown that its operation would constitute a direct and immediate measure of assistance to India's war effort. After careful examination of the position the Government has been

forced to the conclusion that this will not be the case `` (January 2nd )

If industries cannot be built up in a day, equally an army of skilled workers cannot come into being to-morrow. The arrival of 50 Indian workers in England (to be followed by a few hundred more) and the despatch of the same number of English workers to India as highly paid instructors, are trifling futilities.

Officially the war is supposed to be bringing India unbounded prosperity owing to the golden opportunities for rapid industrialisation. In actual fact, India, like other colonies, is experiencing a serious and developing economic crisis which Britain's war policy only serves to accentuate. The effect of reducing the silver content of the rupee from eleven-twelfths to six-twelfths will have a disastrous effect on already unstable internal prices. And, whilst the jute industry manages to flourish on an apparently inexhaustible demand for sandbags, jute itself is being so enormously overproduced that the cultivator is getting the record low price of Rs. 2½ per *maund* and the Bengal Government has taken the drastic step of reducing the acreage under cultivation by one-third in 1941.

So much for the technical and economic difficulties. There remains the fact that the country which Imperialism proposes to mobilise for its war effort is solidly opposed to the war. Wherever and in whatever way the people are organised they have almost unanimously adopted a hostile attitude towards the Government's policy. The Congress, whom even the Imperialists in their saner moments admit to be the most powerful political organisations in India, and which has a paying membership of several million, demands complete independence from Britain and the calling of a Constituent Assembly to frame a democratic constitution. These demands are supported by the Peasant Movement, by the Student Federation, by the Red Shirts (Frontier Moslems), by the Moslem Ahrars, by the Moslem College of Divines, by the Azad Moslem Conference, by the Indian Christian community which has declared that ``the moral contradictions of imperialism have landed Britain in the present crisis. She has sought to justify her own imperialist enslavement of India in sonorous phrases and has sought to stand as the Palladium of Liberty in Europe``. And finally, the all-India

T.U.C has unitedly proclaimed that "participation in a war which will not result in the establishment of freedom and democracy in India, will not benefit India, much less will it benefit the working class of India".

In face of the strength of the popular movement and its support for the national demand for independence, the Imperialists realise the enormous difficulties that lie in the way of carrying out their plans. A Special Correspondent in the *Calcutta Statesman* has no illusions. He writes:

Britain can get a certain amount of raw material, and a certain amount of recruits from India, while the big political parties remain non-co-operating. But defence to-day cannot be based upon that sort of indifferent support.

The stress and the intensity of the present situation in India are reflected in the fact that Imperialism has completely failed to find any basis for an agreed compromise with any considerable section of the Indian bourgeoisie despite the fact that the Right Wing within the Congress was certainly ready for it. In spite of high hopes no basis for co-operation was found with the result that negotiations broke down and the Congress leadership had to embark upon some form of campaign. Gandhi quite frankly stated that any other line of action would have meant the "break-up of the Congress". In these words he admitted the strength of the popular mass pressure that is driving forward the Congress leadership from below.

The complete breakdown of the negotiations with the Viceroy compelled the latter to widen the scope of arrests to leading Congressmen—including those with whom it had been hoped to reach a compromise. Gandhi opened his campaign of "individual civil disobedience" and drew up a list of "victims." And in the past two months Nehru, along with a number of other well-known leaders, including the President of the Congress, have been arrested and either imprisoned or interned.

But the policy of repression and arrests has to be accompanied by "constructive" proposals for India's future as a background to Mr. Amery's slogan of "India First". What new proposals has Mr. Amery to make? At two of his customary midday feasts, one a "Foyle Luncheon" and the other at the English Speaking Union, Mr. Amery unfolded a remarkable and reactionary plan.



In the first place, he suggests that it is necessary, if the deadlock is to be resolved, for India to find *new leaders*, the old men, representing the Congress and other parties, are too hardened in sin. Mr Amery did not suggest, as perhaps will be done by Indians, that the British people also should get rid of the "old gang" before any fruitful talks can take place, nor did he suggest that the people in the Indian States might well like to get rid of their Maharajahs!

Whilst Mr Amery is making these comic suggestions, the desired "new leaders" appear on the scene as if by a miracle. But they are disappointing. Mr Jayakar and Sir T. B. Saprú, those old war-horses of appeasement to Imperialism, come forward with a "let's-all-get-together-in-a-united-effort" plan. But Saprú tried it before in 1929, and failed.

Another rabbit out of the hat of Imperialism is M. N. Roy, described as the "great anti-fascist", the "friend and coadjutor of Lenin", the much boosted "member of the Committee of the Third International". But this practised renegade, slung out of the Communist International in 1929 and slung out of the Congress in 1940, is a poor tool in the hands of Imperialism, hardly deserving of the decorations which, no doubt, will be his for the asking.

Having "solved" the question of leadership, "India First" Amery expounds his new line of thought for India's constitutional future. It is remarkable in its similarity to the fascist corporate state. Instead of the usual democratic forms ("unsuited to Indian conditions") functional representation is proposed, together, perhaps, with an Executive authority independent of the Legislature for the period of its office.

Functional representation is not unknown in India at present. The Lower House of the Federal Government, as planned in 1935, consists of 375 seats, only 86 of which are open to general election. Of the remainder a proportion are reserved to special communities, whilst about 162 are reserved for special classes or "functions". Similarly, in Bengal the Assembly has four seats reserved for hundreds of thousands of workers, five for a few score of landlords, whilst the European commercial interests can muster 26 seats. Applied as a general principle, it is clear that functional representation would permanently provide the vested interests with a parliamentary majority. Mr Amery calls this a new form of democracy! Perhaps

the Labour Party calls it Democratic Imperialism. But Mussolini thought of it first.

But there is no easy possibility of a settlement between Imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. Imperialism has made overtures to this class in the past and will continue to make them in the future in the hope of winning them away from the struggle for freedom and playing upon their special "vacillating compromising tendency". But the position of deadlock reached to-day, resulting in veritable regime of tsarist repression, has in great part been the effect of the mass movement in forcing the Congress to break off negotiations. Gandhi himself, and those whom he represents, does not like any form of mass struggle, but nevertheless he has been forced to sanction some limited form of campaign. All attempts to find some alternative to struggle only have the effect of sharpening the conflict and giving added momentum to the very forces which Gandhi desires to hold in check. Thus, as the mass movement develops, it gives rise to problems of growing sharpness, and the militant workers and peasants, by their mass pressure and agitation, are able to influence the direction of the movement as a whole. For behind and beneath the present "controlled" campaign of "civil disobedience" is the fact that the big industrial areas and the whole countryside are already at grips with the bureaucratic machinery of Imperialism.

Ten years ago, at the Lahore meeting of the Congress, it was the rising militancy of the workers and peasants in strikes, demonstrations and pitched battles, which decided the outcome of that historic meeting and forced the wavering leadership to fall in line with the temper of the masses. And it was the Bombay workers who, on October 2nd, 1939, gave a lead to the whole of India by their declaration of a one-day general strike against the war; it was the villagers in the Malabar district who faced police rifles to demonstrate against the use of the Defence of India Act to suppress their democratic rights; it is the peasants in innumerable villages who are boycotting the war-fund collections and organising hunger marches; and it is the workers again, throughout industry, who are pressing forward relentlessly with the demand for "No compromise with Imperialism".

The strike figures for 1939 and 1940 show with what courage

the organised working class is fighting back against the lowering of the standard of living and against the whole war policy of Imperialism. Although 1939 shows a record number of strikes, nevertheless in the first three months of 1940, in spite of the most violent police repression and the arrest of all leaders, there were 128 strikes, involving 273,990 workers, and the loss of over 4 million days—the approximate equivalent of the total number of days lost in the whole of 1939.

The leadership and direction of this great mass movement rests primarily with the illegal and persecuted Communist Party. Increasing numbers of Congress members are turning towards the workers' and peasants' organisations and espousing their cause both within the Congress and in their class battles. And at the same time the influence of the Communist Party grows. Within the Congress they support unhesitatingly the "National Demands" and through the consistency and energy of their work (according to alarmed police reports) they have come to occupy numerous positions of trust and responsibility in the Congress organisation.

But at the same time the Communists criticise all signs of vacillation and compromise in the Congress leadership, condemning the refusal of the Congress to support the Anti-war Strike and opposing the appointment of Gandhi as director of Congress policy without any programme of action being mandated to him. At the recent Bombay meeting of the Congress the "Left" vigorously demanded, and won considerable support for, a policy of greater trust in the masses.

Testimony of the strength and the courage with which the revolutionary working class leadership is placing itself in the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle is contained in the records of the Government itself. The Police Report for Calcutta contains an analysis of Communist literature and publications seized, which shows that the circulation of such literature is twice as widespread as in the previous year.

Similarly the Police Report for the rural areas of Bengal states .—

The revolutionary parties have been engaged in stirring up agrarian unrest throughout the Province. Information in the possession of Government shows beyond a shadow of doubt that during the year all the revolutionary parties were being organised

under the cloak of the Congress.....There has been a marked increase of Communist activity among the peasantry.

In the light of the great mass movements that are stirring in India, Mr. Amery's constitutional proposals for a government by functional representation reveal their futility even if they are backed up with the might of British bayonets. It begins to look a little foolish, too, for the Labour Party experts to be so free with their promises of everything or anything except what India demands—namely complete independence from British domination. The real voice of the British people is heard in the message which goes out to the Indian people from the People's Convention. Indian nationalists and the workers and peasants who are fighting in the front ranks of the struggle for independence, will receive tremendous encouragement from the knowledge that the people of Britain too are on the move. And we in this country, as the world crisis develops and the rival Great Powers are locked in their deathgrip, will begin to see that the Indian masses are coming into the forefront of the great class struggle out of which a new social order will arise and the domination of one nation by another will be ended.

# INDIA—A CALL TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE

Harry Pollitt

*In no Aspect* of its policy does the Churchill Government reveal such downright incompetence and stupidity, even from the point of view of its own imperialist interests, as in its handling of the Indian question. The recent speech of Mr. Amery has quite rightly set Indian public opinion aflame with indignation that such crude Brummagem Brass methods should be thought good enough to try out once again on the Indian people. For centuries the historic policy in foreign affairs, particularly of British Imperialism, has been that of "Divide and Rule." The diehard Tories especially thought they had brought this policy to such a fine art that no one would ever be able to see through their supposed cleverness. But this time Amery has overdone it, and sections of opinion of the most moderate character in India have been shocked out of their illusions by the blatant pursuit of this policy at the present time.

It is clear to everyone that British Imperialism is in a desperate situation in the conduct of the war against its trade rival, Nazi Germany. One might have thought that this would have prompted a more discreet and delicate handling of the Indian situation. But the Tories learn nothing and forget nothing when it comes to dealing with what they still look upon as a subject people. Incidentally they bring the same mentality to bear on their outlook on the Soviet Union, with all the consequences that this too has brought in its train. So we get the spectacle of the most notorious Imperialist in the Tory Party being placed in charge of India on behalf of the Churchill Government. Naturally such an appointment did not tend to create in India any impression that this war was in any way different from previous imperialist struggles.

The Indian people know only too well that the claim to fight for freedom and democracy is all very well as a means of deceiving peoples as to the real motives of war. But it cannot deceive them ;

because, strange as it may appear, the Indians believe that the test of this is how far you are prepared to apply it in those countries where you have the power to do so immediately. The Indian People have not been blind to the propaganda which declares "that when Britain has won the war, then freedom will be restored to Belgium, Holland, Poland, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, etc." nor are they blind to the fact that the Churchill Government which sponsors this type of propaganda and uses the B.B.C. and the R.A.F. for the purpose of appeals to the people of those countries to revolt against Nazism, itself suppresses with an iron hand any attempt on the part of Indians to try and realise their aims of independence and their right to govern their own country in the way they conceive best in the interests of the Indian people. *Such hypocrisy stinks to the heavens. It exposes the shameless character of British imperialist propaganda.*

The Indian people have not forgotten the promises made to them in the last war, nor how shamefully these same promises were betrayed when the war was over. They do not intend to be deceived again. They are fighting now for their right of independence. Because of this the flower of the Congress Nationalist leaders and of the working class and peasant leaders are ruthlessly placed in concentration camps. We are proud to note that all these methods of intimidation completely fail to damp down the struggle of the Indian people. Indeed, we would be happy to see in Britain as great a struggle on the part of the British people in defence of their own democratic rights as the Indian people are making for theirs.

I write these few lines on the evening of May 11th. This morning I walked from Old Street Tube station to a poplar Shipyard after the great blitz. Everywhere great fires, destroyed buildings, homeless people, for miles walked on glass. I could not help thinking of how the Amerys are always declaring the people of India are not yet fit to be trusted with the government of their own country—when this is the state of affairs in London and Berlin after centuries of so-called government by the cultured Christian capitalist ruling classes.

I say to those who read this. As the days pass, more and more the British people will find out how heavy is the price they are going to pay for our betrayal of the heroic struggle of the Spanish people

from 1936 to 1939. Be on guard now, lest we are called upon to pay an even bitterer price for our betrayal of the struggle of the Indian people in their just fight for their independence.

More and more as this war extends will we find how isolated Britain becomes as the result of this policy of betrayal of democracy and freedom, and the policy of imperialist domination. We can, however, fight against this if we will. Every day brings new evidence of the bankruptcy of the Churchill Government. Just as the chaos and sabotage of production by the big monopoly interests in Britain itself cry aloud for redress, so do the fiascos of Eden and Amery in the realm of foreign policy. Now as never before the British people must be told the truth of how desperate is the situation that the Tory-Labour Coalition Government has placed them in. They must fight against it. And in so doing they must see that the demand for the right of the Indian people to their independence forms as much an integral part of their struggles as for example their own demands in regard to wages and food.

For it is a common struggle we are all engaged in, against a common enemy, and we should be proud to find ourselves fighting alongside such gallant and courageous fighters as the Indian people. The demand that Amery be sacked should find expression throughout Britain. This Tory die-hard, this Brummagem Imperialist, this old crusted representative of everything that is decadent and repressive in British politics is a positive menace, not only to the people of Britain, but to the people of India as well. Do not let it be said that it was only a storm in India that led to his removal; let the British people also help fan the storm waves that will send him into the same sort of retirement as Baldwin and his like.

We salute the Indian people, we hope the mighty wave of revolt that is now sweeping that great country will succeed in finding the road to the complete victory over British imperialism, and that the Indian people will not be fobbed off by any in their own ranks who may grow afraid as the struggle reaches a higher stage. For the winning of freedom for India means the winning of freedom too for the people of Britain.

## THE STATUTES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

These Statutes were framed and approved of by the Communist International in 1934, after the reorganisation of the Party and the formation of the Provisional Central Committee in December, 1933. They were published in International Press Correspondence in the latter part of 1934. A cyclostyled edition of this was issued by the Central Committee as well as by the Calcutta Committee of our Party in 1935 and has been in circulation since. A new edition is now being issued as copies of the old are no more available. Every Provincial Committee must prepare a translation of this basic document in the language of its province and make it available to its District Committees, Town Committees and Cells. It should be noted that this is not a document for free circulation and sale. It is only for the use of party Members. One copy with the secretary of each cell or each Party organisation quite enough.

**The Communist Party of India**, being a section of the Communist International, is the most advanced organised section of the proletariat of India, the highest form of its class organisation.

**The Communist Party of India** carries out the leadership of the proletariat, the toiling peasants and all the toiling masses, organising them in the struggle for the victorious anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, for complete national independence, for the formation of a workers 'and peasants' government on the basis of the Soviet power and for a further struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the full triumph of Socialism according to the programme of the Communist International. The Communist Party of India is a united fighting organisation cemented by conscious proletarian discipline. The Party is strong in its unity, unity of will and unity of action, which are incompatible with any deviation from the programme, any violation of Party discipline and factional grouping inside the Party.

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*These statutes were framed in 1934 after reorganisation of the Communist Party of India in December 1933 and the formation of the Provisional Central Committee. It was approved by the Communist International in 1934 and published in INPRECORR, Vol 14, No. 29 dated 11.5.1934. It was again circulated in 'PARTY LETTER' No. 39 dated 17.6.1941. This is a reproduction of the text of the statutes published in the 'Party Letter' dated 17.6.1941*



**The Communist Party of India** demands from its members active and self-sacrificing work for carrying out the programme of the C I and the draft platform of action of the C P I. It demands also the carrying out of the statutes of the party and fulfilling all the decisions of the party and its organs, the guarantee of the unity of the ranks of the party and the strengthening of the fraternal international relations both between the toilers of the various nationalities of India and with the proletariat of all countries of the world. The party works in all the mass organisations of the toilers, including the most reactionary organisations, seeking to win over the toiling masses of member of these organisations to its side and to isolate the reformist, the national reformist, and socialist reformist leaders.

### **I. Party Members and Their Duties**

1) A Member of the Party is any person who accepts the programme of the C I the draft platform of the Communist Party, and who works in one of the party organisations, obeys the decisions of the Party and the Communist International, and regularly pays the membership dues.

2) A Member of the Party must -

a) Observe the strictest discipline and maintain reticence with regard to secret matters, actively participate in the political life of the Party and the country, carry on in practice the decisions of the Communist International and the Party organs.

b) Tirelessly work to raise his ideological attainments, to master the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and the chief political and organisational decisions of the Party and explain them to the non-party masses.

c) Be a member of the mass organisation (Trade Unions etc.) and carry on tireless work there under the leadership of the Party Committee for strengthening the political and organisational influence of the Party.

d) Join mass organisation to toilers (Trade Unions etc.) which are under the influence and the leadership of the reformist and the national reformist and other opponents, and carry on there a tireless every-day ideological and organisational struggle for liberating the toiling masses from the influence of the class enemies, winning these masses to the side of the Communist Party and thus isolating

the reformist and the national reformist opponents from the toiling masses.

e) Besides participating, organising and leading everyday struggles of workers and peasants for practical demands, to carry on tireless agitation and propaganda among the workers and other toilers and spreading the ideas of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution and the ideas of Communism.

3) Members are accepted into the Party only as individuals and through the Party cells. Newly recruited Party members must be confirmed by the city committee or local committee.

4) If whole groups from other political organisations join the Communist Party, or if whole political organisations want to join the C P., a proper decision of the Central Committee is required for their acceptance.

NOTE : If leading members from other political parties come over to the Party, in addition to the sanction of the town committee or local committee, it is necessary to have the sanction of the Central Committee.

5) When accepting a new Party member, he must be vouched for by at least two members of the Party who know him well both at his place of work and his place of residence. The comrades recommending him are responsible for him, and in case of improper recommendations, will be subject to Party disciplinary measures, to the point of exclusion from the Party. When a member of a Communist Youth Organisation is accepted, a recommendation is required from the corresponding committee of this organisation of which he was a member before joining the Party.

6) Member of the Party can go from one district to another only according to the rules laid down by the Central Committee for the purpose. The consent of the Central Committee of the Party is required to go to another country.

7) Every member of the Party who works in some local organisation and is going to work in the area of another local organisation, will be registered by the latter as one of its members.

8) The question of the expulsion of anyone from the Party is decided by a General Meeting of the cell of which the given person is a member, and is confirmed by the town or local committee. Pending the decision of the town committee, the person in question can be removed from party work.

9) The following are expelled from the Party :

1) open or concealed supporters of Gandhism, of the Roy group and other political trends condemned by the C P as enemies of Communism and as disorganisers and betrayers of the struggle for national independence,

2) open or concealed violators of the iron discipline of the Party,

3) those who betray in any way secret party affairs (it must be remembered that this leads to a position that the Party can be disorganised and Party workers arrested).

4) provocateurs, careerists, traitors, morally degenerate people and those who, by their improper conduct, harm the good name and soil the banner of the Party,

5) class-alien and hostile elements, who have crept into the Party by deception, concealing their counter-revolutionary or criminal past or their previous connections with the police

## **II. The Organisational Structure of the Party**

10) The party is conducted as a strictly underground organisation. The underground organisations of the Party in their work make it their central task to develop most widely mass work to establish its leadership in the mass revolutionary movements and with this aim combine the method of underground work and semi-underground work and open work

11) The leading principle of the organisational structure of the Party is democratic centralism, which means -

a) all the leading organs of the Party, from top to bottom, are elected

b) the Party organs periodically report on their work to their Party organisations

c) the strictest Party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority

d) decisions of the Comintern and higher Party organs are unquestionably obligatory for lower organs and for all members of the Party

12) The Party is built on the foundations of democratic centralism according to the territorial-industrial principle. Organisations which embrace any district as a whole are considered as higher than organisations which embrace part of the given district

13) All the Party organisations are autonomous in deciding local questions, provided that these decisions do not conflict with the decisions of the Party and the Comintern

14) The highest leading organ of every organisation is the general meeting, conference or congress.

15) The general meeting, conference or congress elects a committee, which is their executive organ and guides all the current work of the organisation.

NOTE : 1) For reasons of underground work, in accordance with the decisions of higher Party committees, the lower Party committee can be formed without election at the corresponding Party conference, but by appointment or also by combining election with co-options, i.e., only a part of the Party committee is elected at the Party conference and the other part of the Party committee is co-opted, 2) For reasons of underground work, it is also permissible for the elections to take place not at the Party conference, but by selecting persons from among the best activists who have been selected in advance by the higher Party committee from the cells and fractions in mass organisations, trade unions, etc.

16) The organisational scheme of the Party is as follows -

a) Territory of India: All-India Party Congress, which elects the Central Committee of the C. P. of India

b) Province: Provincial Party Conference and Provincial Party Committee.

c) Town (or Locality): Town (local) Conference, Town (local) Committee

d) Factory, Chawl (Basti) or Village. General Meeting of cell, bureau or organiser of cells.

17) Order of subordination of Party organs : All-India Party Congress, C. C. of the C. P. of India Provincial Party Conference, Provincial Party Committee; Town (local) Party Committee; General Meeting of Cell, Bureau or Organiser of Cell.

NOTE . In respect to provinces where a provincial committee has not yet been organised, the C. C. directly leads the local Party organisations, and in places where there are no local organisations it directly leads the various cells. The same applies to the provincial committee in provinces where local and district committees have not yet been organised everywhere. In such cases, the provincial committee directly leads the work of the various cells and local Party organisations.

### III. The Central Organisations of the Party

18) The highest organ of the Party is the Congress. Congresses

are called if possible once a year. Extraordinary Congresses are called by the Central Committee on its own initiative or at the demand of not less than one-third of the total number of members represented at the last Party Congress. Extraordinary Congresses are called at the expiration of two months.

The Congress is to be considered as having full powers if it has representatives from not less than half the members of the Party represented at the last regular Congress. Representation quotas at the Congress and the method of election are decided by the C. C.

**NOTE** If it is impossible to call a Congress of the Party, the C. C. will call an enlarged session of the Plenum of the C. C. with the participation of representatives of the provincial committees. Such an enlarged plenum of the C. C. has the right by arrangement with the C. I. to change the composition of the C. C.

19) The Congress a) discusses and confirms the report of the Central Committee, b) revises and changes the programme and statutes of the Party, c) decides on the tactical line of the Party on the basic questions of current politics, d) elects the Central Committee. During the sittings of the Party Congress a small auditing commission has to be elected, which looks through the financial affairs of the past period, and at the end of the Congress reports the results of its work, and is then dissolved.

20) The Central Committee is elected by the Congress. In case a member of the Central Committee leaves it, he will be replaced by one of the candidates in the order fixed by the Congress.

**NOTE** The Central Committee has a right to co-opt members to the Central Committee.

21) The Central Committee organises the Politbureau for current work. The Politbureau appoints a Secretary whose task is to guide the proper distribution of the Party functionaries and control the fulfilment of the directives of the C. I., the decisions of the Party Congress and the Central Committee.

22) The members of the Central Committee are attached as instructors and representatives of the Central Committee to definite provincial organisations and also divide among themselves the various fields of activity of the Central Committee -

a) Editor of the Central Party organ

b) A manager of the Central technical apparatus and of distribution of literature

c) Treasurer

- d) Head of the work of Party fractions in the mass organisations
- e) Head of the special apparatus
- f) Head of the Party educational department.

NOTE : According to the concrete conditions of work, the Central Committee can combine some of these functions and give to one person, or set up new departments etc.

Special work must be entirely separated from the general party work.

23) The Central Committee leads the whole work of the Party in the interval between the congresses, represents the Party in its relations with other organisations, organises various Party institutions and guides their activity, appoints the editor of the Central Party organ, confirms the secretaries and editors of Party organs of Provincial Party Committees, distributes the forces and funds of the Party and is in charge of the Central Funds.

24) With the aim of strengthening the Bolshevik leadership over the work of local party organisations, the Central Committee has the right to create in some parts of the country Regional Bureaux of the Central Committee which would include several provinces. to send representatives and instructors to the localities. The Regional Bureaux of the Central Committee, representatives and instructors of the Central Committee must work on the basis of special instructions laid down every time by the C. C. or the Politbureau

25) The Central Committee regularly informs the Party organisations of its general work by sending out special information bulletins and also by sending members and representatives of the Central Committee to the localities to give reports on its work

#### **IV. The Provincial Organisation of the Party**

26) The highest organ of the Provincial Party organisation is the Provincial Party Conference, and in the intervals between Conferences, the highest organ is the Provincial Party Committee. In its actions , it must be guided by the decisions of the Congress of the Communist Party of India and its leading organs.

NOTE : The Provincial Committee works on the territory included in the administrative boundaries of the province. It might be formed from the town organisation of the main city of the province. When the town organisation of the provincial centre gets strong enough. the town committee, while maintaining the functions of the leading organ for the town Party organisation, takes on for a time, till a

proper Provincial Committee is built, the rights and duties of the Provincial Committee and develops its work in the administrative limits of the province, beginning with the chief industrial centres.

27) The regular Provincial Conference is called by the Provincial Party Committee if possible one in six months. Extraordinary Conferences are called at the decision of the Provincial Committee or on the decision of one-third of the total number of members of the Provincial organisation, provided that consent of the Central Committee is given

Quotas of representation and the manner of election to the provincial conference are fixed every time by the Provincial Committee

The Provincial Party Conference discusses and confirms the report of the work of the Provincial Committee and elects the committee of five members and two candidates and delegates to the All-India Communist Party Congress.

28) The Provincial Committee appoints a Secretary and an assistant. The Secretary of the Provincial Committee directs the proper distribution of Party workers and ensures the fulfilment of the decisions of the Provincial Party Conference, the Provincial Committee, and the directives of the Central Committee of the Party. The Secretaries of each Provincial Committee are confirmed by the Central Committee of the Party. The Provincial Committee gives regular reports on its work to the Central Committee on the date and in forms as established by the Central Committee.

29) In order better to carry out the tasks which face the Provincial Committee and to ensure the proper leadership of the work of the local Party organisations, the members of the Provincial Party Committee are attached to definite districts of the province and divide among themselves the functions of the Provincial Committee, such as .

a) Editor of the Provincial organ (confirmed by the C. C. of the Party)

b) A manager of the Provincial technical apparatus and the organiser of the distribution of literature

c) Treasurer

d) Head of the work of the fractions in mass organisations

e) Head of the special apparatus

f) Head of the Party educational department.

**NOTE :** According to the concrete conditions of the work, the Provincial Committee may combine several of these functions in one comrade, form new functions etc., or appoint comrades outside of the Committee members to carry on such work as of technical apparatus, subordinating him directly to the Secretary.

30) The Provincial Committee leads all the work of the provincial organisations in the intervals between provincial conferences, represents the provincial organisation of the Party in relation with other organisations and institutions, organises various provincial Party institutions and guides their activity, appoints the editors of the provincial newspapers, confirms the secretaries and editors of district organs, distributes the forces and funds of the provincial organisations and has charge of the Provincial Treasury.

31) With the aim of strengthening the proper leadership of the local organisations and ensuring a more thorough check-up on the fulfilment of decisions, the Provincial Committee has the right to send representatives and instructors to the localities.

## **V. The Town and Local Organisations**

32) In the town and talukas or firkas, town (or local) organisations are formed, with the confirmation of the Provincial Committee. The highest organ of the town (or local) Party organisation is the town (or local) conference. The town (or local) Party conference is called by the town (or local) Party Committee, if possible every six months. Extraordinary Conferences are called on the decision of the town (or local) Committee, or at the demand of one-third of the total number of members in the town (or local) organisation.

The town (or local) conference discusses and confirms the report of the town (or local) committee, elects the town (or local) committee.

33) The town (or local) committee elects a Secretary (to be confirmed by the Provincial Committee), organises and confirms cells and fractions in mass organisations, organises the collection of membership dues, organises various Party institutions and commissions within the limits of the town (or locality) and guides their activity, appoints the editor of the town (or locality) Party organ (to be confirmed by the provincial Committee), guides the work of the cells and the fractions in the lower ranks of the mass organisations, distributes the forces and funds of the Party within the limits of the town (or locality) and has charge of the town (or local) funds.



34) In order better to carry out the tasks which face the town (or local) committee, the members of the town (or local) committee are attached to definite cells and fractions in mass organisations as representatives or instructors of the committee, and also distribute among themselves the chief functions of the apparatus of the town (or local) committee -

- a) The Editor of the town (or local) organ
- b) The leader of the town (or local) technical apparatus and the distribution of literature
- c) The Treasurer
- d) The Head of the work of the fractions in mass organisations
- e) The Head of the special work

NOTE According to the concrete conditions of the work, the town (or local) committee may combine several of these functions in one person, form new functions, etc. The special work has to be entirely separated from the general Party work

f) The town (or local) committee will give regular reports on its work to the Provincial Committee on the dates and in the forms which are fixed by the Provincial Committee

## **VI. The Section Committees in The Big Cities**

35) In the big towns with the permission of the Central Committee section organisations are formed under the control of the town committee, and work under its direction. The section organisations of big towns will work according to the rules of the town organisations

## **VII. C E L L S**

36) The basis of the Party is the factory cell. These cells are formed in factories, mills, big farms, units, institutions, etc. if there are not less than three Party members. Besides the factory cells in the mills, chawl (basti) and street cells are organised from among the Party members who cannot be in factory cells like small handicraftsmen and traders, housewives etc. In the village, village cells are organised. Special cells act on the basis of special instructions of the Central Committee. The cells are confirmed by the town (or local) committee

NOTE Each group of class-conscious workers, poor peasants, and other toilers can, on their own initiative, organise a party cell and begin communist work among the masses. Such party cells

which are organised on the initiative of non-party class-conscious workers can be accepted into the Party by the town (or local) party committee, according to the statutes after a careful and personal investigation of the membership both in respect to political views and in respect to honesty and loyalty to the cause of the revolution.

37) In big factories, in order to adapt to conditions of underground existence, separate department cells are organised, and , through cell organisers, form a joint unit.

38) The cell links up the workers, peasants and others with the leading organs of the Party. Its tasks are :

a) Agitational and organisational work among the masses for the Party slogans and decisions;

b) The attraction of sympathisers and new members and their political education :

c) The publication of a factory paper or wall-paper ;

d) Assistance to the town (or local) committee in its every-day organisational and agitational work ;

e) Active participation as a Party unit in the economic and political life of their factory and city, and also of the whole country, active participation in the discussion and solution and carrying out of all general Party decisions.

39) In order to carry out the current work, the cell elects a secretary, who is to be confirmed by the town (or local) committee. The members of the cell distribute among themselves various duties in the factory: 1) Collection of membership dues. 2) publication and distribution of the factory party paper; 3) leadership of the fractions of the factory mass organisations (Trade Union, sport, cultural, educational, etc.) : 4) active work among the toiling masses and recruiting new members; 5) actively carry out the decisions of the cell and higher Party organisations.

### **VIII. Fractions in Mass Organisations**

40) At all congresses, meetings, and in the elected organs of the mass organisations outside the Party-trade unions, factory committees, peasant organisations, co-operative societies, sports clubs, youth organisations, etc.– where there are not less than three Party members, Party fractions are organised which must function in an organised way, strengthen Party discipline, work to increase the influence of the Party, carry Party policy among non-party masses. For current work the fraction elects a secretary.

41) The fraction is completely controlled by the corresponding Party committee, (C. C., Provincial Committee, Town (or local) Committee or nucleus) and on all questions must strictly and without vacillation, carry out the decisions of the Party organisations which lead them.

The fractions of the higher bodies of mass organisations, by agreement with the corresponding Party Committee, may send directives to the fractions of the lower bodies of the same mass organisations, and the latter must carry them out without fail as directives from a higher Party organ.

### **IX. Inner-Party Democracy and Party Discipline**

42) The free and businesslike discussion of Party policy in the various organisations or in the Party as a whole is the indefeasible right of every member of the Party, arising from inner-Party democracy. Only on the basis of inner-Party democracy can Bolshevik self-criticism be developed and Party discipline strengthened, as the latter should be conscious and not mechanical. But a discussion on questions of Party policy must be developed in such a way that it should not lead to Party organisations or Party workers being exposed to the police terror or to attempts on the part of an insignificant minority to force their views on the vast majority of the Party members and to attempt to form factional groups which will break the unity of the Party, which will lead to splitting the working class. Therefore, a wide inner-Party discussion can be recognised as necessary, only if :

a) this necessity is recognised by at least several big provincial organisations ;

b) inside the Central Committee, there is not a sufficiently firm majority on the chief questions of Party policy ;

c) despite the existence of a firm majority in the C. C. for a certain point of view, the C. C. nevertheless considers it necessary to verify the correctness of its policy by discussion in the Party.

Only if these conditions are carried out and secrecy is insured, can the Party be guaranteed against the misuse of inner-Party democracy by anti-Party elements. Only on these conditions can we reckon on inner-Party democracy being useful for the cause and not being utilised to damage the Party and the working class. Discussion must take place under the strong leadership of the

Central Committee and in the localities under the leadership of the Provincial, Town or Local Committees

43) The preservation of the unity of the Party, a merciless struggle against the slightest attempt at factional struggle and splits, the strictest Party discipline are the first duties of all members of the Party and all Party organisations

In order to bring about the strictest discipline inside the Party and secure the greatest unity, while removing all factions, the Central Committee has the right to apply all Party penalties to the point of expulsion from the Party in cases of violation of discipline or the existence of factions

44) The decisions of the leading Party organs must be carried out exactly and rapidly, failure to carry out the decisions of higher organisations and other actions which are recognised as crimes against the Party will be dealt with as follows -

*For a Local Organisation* Censure and a general re-organisation (disbanding the organisation),

*For Individual Party Members* Various forms of censure (public rebuke, reprimand, etc ). public censure temporary removal from responsible work, expulsion from the Party

All Party organisations from cells upwards have the right to inflict Party penalties In order to carry on a preliminary investigation of the activity of Party members, Party committees may set up in individual cases, if it be necessary, a temporary investigation committee, whose conclusions later must be confirmed by the Party Committee

## **X. The Financial Resources of the Party**

45) The financial resources of the Party and its organisations are comprised of membership dues, income from Party undertakings, and other incomes

46) The monthly membership dues for Party Members are as follows Unemployed members of the Party are exempt from the payment of membership dues

47) On entering the Party an entrance fee of Re 1/- must be paid

48) The Central Committee decides what proportion of the membership dues will remain at the disposal of the cell and how much will be put at the disposal of the town or local committees, provincial committees and the C C

## FREEDOM'S BATTLE

V. K. Krishna Menon

What is the role of the Indian and other colonial peoples in the titanic struggle that now rages ?

The embattled ranks of the free Soviet people, their formidable weapons, their impenetrable armour of steel and will, hold in deadly combat the ruthless and aggressive might of Nazi imperialism. That eighteen hundred mile battle-front witnesses not only the most gigantic engagements in human history and great feats of daring and strategy, but the grim determination of a united people, who give battle or scorch their earth to destroy Fascism so that it may never rise again.

The attack on the Soviet Union aroused the spontaneous solidarity of vast sections of people in every country in the world, not excluding those now part of the greater Reich Germans and Finns, goaded into battle by their Nazi masters, have deserted and sought their liberation in the ranks of the "enemy" Not Quislings, not traitors or hirelings, but pronounced anti-Fascists and democrats lead this response.

Nowhere has this response been more spontaneous, more extensive or more deep-sprung than among the colonial peoples. Subject : they yearn and strive passionately for freedom which to them is the greatest of all realities. To them the victory of the Soviet Union is not merely the hope of freedom, but the guarantee of its achievement. They realise that the Soviet people have unfailingly recognised the common interests of the peoples of the world. The passions of deadly war have not shaken the Soviet people in this basic knowledge and belief ; their leaders have proclaimed that the Soviet Union has faithful allies among the peoples of the world, not excluding the German people. The subject people know that the U.S.S.R. has no imperialist interests, she wages no war on any people, and covets no territories. Where rulers and exploiters have led people into war against the Soviet Union, she has brought the conflict to a victorious conclusion not only for herself, but for the people of the other country, whom she has often liberated.

The Soviet Union has consistently championed the struggles for national independence and the autonomy of nationalities. Her own liberation from Tsarist tyranny and the dawn of a fuller life for 180 million people, not "welded" into a "nation", but members of a free and powerful fraternity, has given great inspiration to the colonial peoples, and stirred the masses in these oppressed lands to new hopes and sustained endeavour. It has also inspired and enabled national movements of liberation to recognise their role and seek to play their part in a freer world and in the world struggle for people's freedom.

In India, the national movement has reached a high stage of political development. It commands the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people. It offers fearless and unrelenting resistance to imperial domination. It has well defined objectives. It has maintained and advanced national unity in India in the face of all attacks and subterfuges by interested parties.

This alone would not, however, entitle it to claim political maturity in the present-day world. The clear recognition that the national struggle is part of the struggle for a freer world, that India and her people, even though powerless to commit or to control their government, must declare themselves in relation to world affairs is integral to the policies and programmes of the Indian national movement.

The rise of Fascism in Europe and Asia, its depredations and its allies, its increasing threat, actual and potential, to the peoples of the world, aroused deep concern in India. Soon – and sooner than in most countries of the West – it resulted in decisive alignments and prodigious mass activity. The participation in the world anti-Fascist front became integral to policy, which attained increasing clarity in formulation as the world struggle developed. Their hostility to Fascism has been enduring and intense. The support of the peoples' struggle in China and Spain and the mass solidarity with those peoples is one of the major chapters of recent Indian history. Equally, the Indian people have declared their determination to resist imperialist war or commitments imposed on them without their consent and free co-operation.

In September, 1939, the British Government declared India a belligerent country without consent or consultation, thus deliberately flouting public opinion. Legislation in Parliament and Ordinances

in India further restricted the narrow sphere and competence of the provincial governments and substantially increased the enormous powers of the Viceroy. The numerous Ordinances promulgated affect every aspect of Indian life and provide for extreme penalties in a few weeks. thousands of men and women of the National peasant and working class movement were rounded and put into prison, although no general resistance had been declared.

The Congress asked the British government, on the 14th September, 1939, to declare its purposes and to apply to India and to the colonial peoples the principles of liberty and national Independence to vindicate which it claimed to be waging war against the Nazis. There is no section of Indian opinion that is not anti-Nazi, and none more passionately so than the popular movements. Even the British Government and other detractors have repeatedly admitted that the Indian people are passionately anti-Fascist.

Nazi-propaganda has found Indian soil barren. The Fuhrer-Non-Indian, now in an internment camp, stumped the country, thanks to official benevolence. Sir Reginald Maxwell, of the Indian Government, considers even now that the Nazis are better people than the brave Indian anti-Fascists whom it has put into concentration camps. The pro-Fascist elements in India are to be found among the young bloods of the European Associations and in other high places. It is they who have been armed—virtually a private army of a class.

The British Government however, rode roughshod over Indian opinion, refused every reasonable request, imposed more Ordinances and behaved as though this war was its exclusive concern! There was no pretence in India that it was a people's war! Indeed, British Statesmen spoke of the "freedom of Europe."

In the twelve months which followed the declaration of India's belligerency, the Indian national movement strove patiently and tenaciously to obtain the release of the forces of freedom in India. Yet the Government ignored the vital claim of the Indian people that they were entitled to play their part as a free people in world affairs. It chose to rely on the time-honoured weapons, coercion, "divide and rule" misrepresentation, and on its Quislings.

Having rejected the proposals of the Indian National Congress, the Government fell back on its discredited devices, and offered a

plan for enlarging the Viceroy's Executive Council by the appointment of representatives of the "great political parties" to it. It also proposed an advisory committee of a larger size to enable India to assist in the war effort. The Congress ignored the British proposal. Other political parties expressed disappointment and anger. Months passed, the scheme had no sponsors or supporters in India. Autocracy, which had obtained now over the larger part of India, increased coercion for war purposes, more imprisonments and suppression continued.

The final break between the Congress and the Government could not be postponed. In October, 1940, Congress embarked on civil disobedience, severely restricted at first, and later extended, but only by selected individuals. Nehru was arrested and sentenced to four years' imprisonment for speeches made to the peasantry at Gorakhpur. "illiterate villagers and therefore highly inflammable material," said, the Magistrate. Others followed, almost all leaders of the Congress, former Congress Ministers and the majority of Congress members of legislatures. In a few months the number swelled though resistance was still strictly controlled by Mr. Gandhi, and at the end of May there were twenty thousand men and women in prison for their advocacy of the Congress cause. In addition there are over 800 in concentration camps, among them well-known Socialists and Communists, Hindus, Moslems, men and women, students, peasants, workers, leaders, followers, and every one of them a convinced anti-Fascist. The penalisation of opinion, of pro-Soviet views, of agitation for improvement of standards of life and wages of workers, restrictions on the press, and an insistently directed hostility to working class, Communist, student and peasant leaders is a feature of the nation-wide repression that now obtains.

Such is the disastrous spectacle that is the consequence of British policy in India. *Men who should be leading the fight against Nazism are in British prisons; those who could mobilise the vital forces of freedom in India for world freedom are languishing in jails and concentration camps, subject to humiliation and much cruelty.*

This does not complete the picture. More and heavier burdens have been placed on the peasantry. Price fixing Ordinances hit the producers hard while the cost of living rises and the prices of imported goods soar. The war effort sees India selling raw material



at controlled prices and buying imported goods at high prices. Raw produce such as jute, corn and grain lie unsold and unexported owing to the loss of markets and Ordinance regulations. Distress increases. Large scale strikes and peasant demonstrations have vastly increased. In spite of the war and the great needs of war production, Indian industrial development is surprisingly limited, taking all-round figures.

All this is not the picture of an unhappy past which we may, without loss forget, but is the stark reality. It is believed that the British Government, having failed to secure any support for its plan in India, is about to impose it \* It may then be proclaimed to the world that Indian co-operation has now been secured, but facts will contradict the claim. The Government plan is as futile as it is dangerous

Meanwhile, world events move with unprecedented rapidity. No event in our time so emphatically proclaims the compelling nature of the new situation as the Anglo-Soviet Alliance. There have been Russo-British alliances before, open and secret. Some of them are the more sinister chapters of European history. They were the alliances of two empires (and of Royal relations) against a newer and more energetic rival. An alliance between the Soviet Union and Britain is a fundamentally different arrangement. Indeed, it was this difference that stood so adamantly in the way of such an alliance in the days prior to the war and made the opposition to it their corner stone of Imperial foreign policy and insisted on its maintenance till the entire world situation was transformed by the Soviet Union leaping to arms as the effective champion of resistance to Nazism in its path of world Empire. Britain is not now in alliance with the Russia of the Czars not with another empire who equally seeks with the defeat of a rival imperialism, but with a mighty people's State, which is the antithesis of Empire. The Soviet Union seeks no territories or imperial gains of trade or commerce or colonisation. The civilisation which it is fighting to defend is incompatible with the domination of peoples at home or abroad, or with participation in world imperialism. Its role is as that of the leader and the bulwark of the people against world empire, which is Hitler's objective. It transforms the character of the world struggle to the colonial peoples.

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\* The forecast here given was borne out by Mr Amery's announcement in parliament on 22nd July.

Nazi imperialism has hurled itself against the mightiest bulwark which stands between it and world domination. Its challenge summons the peoples of the world to action. It calls for the fullest mobilisation of all the forces of freedom everywhere. Nowhere are those forces so vital, so awaiting release, so ready to take a place in the world-front against Nazism as in India. The Indian people are aware of the basic purposes of the U.S.S.R. and her contribution to world peace and national independence. They are conscious of the newer and vital elements which have now entered this world-battle. They know that the battlefield is no mere Russo-German battlefield. Their enslavement alone hampers the fulfilment of the task which the world situation demands from them. From this bondage they must secure their release. That release is no mere national ambition, it is no exclusive national concern or destiny. It is part of common world purposes.

Every practical consideration, every moral argument, every reasonable calculation points to the conclusion that the emancipation of India is now supremely imperative. There are no insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of free co-operation with India. It is too late in the day to argue that there are minorities which bar the establishment of independence. By that token Poland Czechoslovakia and Syria would all be condemned to subjection. Nor can it be contended seriously that it takes twenty-eight years to make a General and that India, therefore, could not defend herself. Soviet achievement, China and Spain, and on the opposite side France, in recent years, have discredited this argument. At this historic hour, freedom's battle calls for the fullest mobilisation of Britain's moral and material resources. It calls for the release of all the forces now enchained, crippled or stultified by narrow and sectional interests of privilege, profit or empire.

The suppression of India is one of the major factors in the present situation. It diverts the energies of the British from the field of the real battle of the British people. It confuses British purposes and makes it less capable of that wide acceptance which is imperative at this juncture. It hampers the Indian people from playing their significant part in the world struggle for people's freedom.

*Release India! Release India for freedom's battle!*

*July 20th, 1941*

*Task of the Communists*

## THE PEOPLE'S WAR AGAINST HITLER FASCISM

### 1. Fight for Proletarian Internationalism.

1 With the Nazi attack on the Soviet, the proletariat and its parties are called upon to define their attitude towards the present war on the basis of the fundamental principles of revolutionary internationalism and take immediate and decisive practical steps. The question has become all the more urgent in colonies like India, where the proletariat, along with the people finds itself enslaved to a foreign imperialism involved in this war, and where consequently any change in its attitude towards it appears contrary to its national interests, as a slackening of its work for national liberation and assumes the colour of compromise and even "co-operation" with its national oppressor.

2 To concretely apply the principles of revolutionary Marxism to the war in its present phase, it is necessary to study and understand the developments that led to it. It is essential to study the genesis of the war in its first phase, and make a searching analysis of the class forces behind it in both the phases. For, as on every other question, the proletariat and its parties decide their attitude towards the war also only on the basis of class position and nothing else.

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*Document sent by the leaders of the Communist Party of India, who were then in Jail, in 1941, covering their views on what should be the attitude and policy of the Communist Party of India towards World War II after Nazi Germany attacked U.S.S.R. on 22nd June, 1941. This document is known as "JAIL DOCUMENT"*

## Genesis of The Second World War

3 The second imperialist war, like the first one epitomised the intense imperialist rivalries to dominate and exploit the world

*Conspiracy Against  
The Soviet*

Yet it arose under circumstances far different from the first one. It arose under an entirely new class situation. Its most arresting, most signal feature was there

it inevitably arose out of the failure of the plans of imperialist encirclement of the only proletarian state, of imperialist intervention which was to be led by Germany and later on by Japan, supported by Anglo-American Imperialism. It arose out of the disruption of the attempted counter-revolutionary front of the world bourgeoisie against the USSR, against the world proletariat to solve their rivalries at the expense of the proletarian state. It was not merely a question of redistributing the world or subjugation of nations. *IT WAS ONE OF DESTROYING SOCIALISM AND REDISTRIBUTING THE SOCIALIST WORLD AMONG THE POWERS.* To forget this cardinal feature of the genesis of the war is to miss the class position of the contending classes and misread subsequent developments

4 The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was the proletarian counter-thrust against this conspiracy of encirclement of intervention, which very nearly succeeded

*From Intervention to  
Imperialist War*

It was the wedge driven by the proletarian state, by its proletariat, in the ranks of the counter-revolution. Defeated by this

stroke in their nefarious conspiracy, the bourgeoisie tumbled into the most ferocious and brutal war among themselves. *From intervention to imperialist war such has been progress of events and developments leading to the second war. From attempts to build a counter-revolutionary front to its disruption and the most fierce tearing at it with their own hands, with mighty weapons—such is the genesis of the second war*

## Joint Front Against Fascism

5 The background of this master-stroke of proletarian strategy was the ceaseless struggle of the two contending classes waged over a number of years in the international arena. The

*How Soviet Sought  
to Prevent it*

rise of Nazi Germany with its aggressive imperialist ambitions, with its declared anti-Bolshevism, was the signal for the proletariat, led by the Proletarian State to sound the warning to the working men and peoples of all countries against the impending disaster of an attack against the Soviet. Financed by the most reactionary elements in Britain, encouraged by them to expand eastwards, Nazi Germany was rapidly becoming the spearhead of the bourgeois counter-revolution against the USSR. The proletariat led by the Soviet struck fiercely at this new menace. As yet there was no unanimity between different imperialisms. Sections of French imperialists and the French people as a whole looked askance at the policy on strengthening Germany, especially since the former realised that this could be done only by endangering their imperial and national interests of the continent. The French people themselves were mightily afraid of a strong Germany lest it should threaten their own freedom. A number of smaller nations and their bourgeoisie were equally opposed to a militarised Germany. They realised that their liberty and independence would be the first casualties in a German expansion. Before Germany could launch an attack on the Soviet, the Greater Reich with its protectorates had to come into being. The proletariat struck back vigorously, attempting to rally the people, the smaller nations, and even sections of the bourgeoisie whose immediate interests ran counter to the ultimate interests of world capitalism, the destruction of the USSR which was immediately sponsored by the most reactionary elements of British imperialism. The proletarian state appealed to the peoples of the world to form a common front against fascism at home and abroad. The Communist international unfolded a programme of popular front nationally, which was aimed at isolating the most reactionary sections who were supporting fascism internationally and those who were organising it at home.

6. For the first time, the proletariat and its parties made distinctions between imperialist nations, distinguishing aggressor nations from non-aggressor ones. distinctions which were so thoroughly denounced by Lenin himself during the last war, distinctions which became invalid, opportunist, the moment the second world war broke out.

*Aggressors and  
Non-Aggressors*

As part of this same programme of the widest possible front, the parties of the proletariat in imperialist countries, agitated for the extension of democratic rights and civil liberties in the colonies, liberal concession, etc., and nothing more. Not that the slogan of right to national independence was given up. *BUT THE IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME DID NOT INCLUDE THE PRECONDITIONS OF A POPULAR FRONT. IT HOME WERE NOT BASED ON THE RIGHT OF THE COLONIES TO REVOLT.* It could not be done just because the widest possible front against interventionist reactionaries, a front which extended to sections of imperialist bourgeois themselves, had to be built. The Party must first remember this point. The colonial masses were expected to participate on two fronts, without national revolution having been first achieved. The proletarian state, followed by proletarian parties, repeatedly appealed and agitated for collective security and peace based on it. After years of isolation, the proletarian state entered the arena of international politics as a state and sought the co-operation of certain bourgeois-imperialist states to curb Nazi Germany, the spearhead of interventionist attack. Collective security means just such co-operation between the proletarian and bourgeois states. It was to ensure international peace by curbing Nazism in time. Failing that it was to be a common front of people, colonial masses included, and their governments in an anti-Nazi war.

This recapitulation of recent history is necessary, for it seems that the class forces who believed it have been forgotten. People

#### *Why the Distinction*

seem to remember it only as a struggle for "peace" and "democracy." How came it then that the International, the proletarian state, began to distinguish between the aggressors and non-aggressors? Was not Britain as much an aggressor as Germany herself? In fact was not Britain a confirmed aggressor, while Nazi Germany only a potential one at the time when distinctions were drawn? How could the proletariat and its parties demand popular front governments which were bourgeois governments, which agreed only to keep democracy intact, and that too, at home and not in the colonies? Since when did we become so enamoured of bourgeois democracy as to draw such important and even fundamental distinctions between it and the other kind of bourgeois dictatorships—fascism, as to extend

support to the former in a war against the latter? Was it opportunism of a state—the Soviet—of a nation, of a power which found itself cornered by other powers?

7 It was nothing of the sort if you take into consideration the class positions of the two classes. To the proletariat, and this must be grasped in all its implications, the Soviet is not merely a state or a power, an ally or a friendly country. It is the bastion of Socialism, the proletarian fortress from which international proletariat hurls its challenge to the capitalist world. It is the consolidation of the November Revolution, the biggest and the only breach in the steel wall of capitalism. The fate of the proletariat, of the enslaved nations, depends on keeping the breach open and then widening it. That is why the defence of the only proletarian state, the only fatherland of the proletariat, is the fundamental task of all proletariats.

### Strategy of Isolating the Main Enemy

8 The proletariat attaches such fundamental importance to the defence of the USSR that it decides its immediate attitude towards parties, classes, governments AND STATES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOVIET. Temporarily, it allies itself with all those sections and welcomes all such government as ally themselves with the Soviet, genuinely and sincerely. It was because of this new factor in the situation, as contrasted with the first world war, that the distinction between democracy and fascism, between aggressor and non-aggressor imperialist states could be made. Democracy could be *DISTINGUISHED FROM FASCISM ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANE ONLY IN SO FAR AS IT WAS CAPABLE OF FIGHTING IN DEFENCE OF THE USSR*. The moment it ceased to do that, the distinction lost all meaning. The non-aggressor nations could be distinguished from the aggressors only in so far as the aggression of the new aggressors was a preparation for an assault on the Soviet. *REALLY IT WAS DISTINCTION BETWEEN AGGRESSORS OR NON-AGGRESSORS OF THE PROLETARIAT*

*Attitude to The Soviet  
The Touch Stone*

*Defence of  
The Soviet Union*

## ~~THE~~ Documents of The Communist Movement In India

**STATE** The former could again be distinguished in so far as they were not only not directly interested in the assault, but could be expected to join hands with the Soviet against the aggressors out of selfish motives of defending their empires, of preserving their past gains. Beyond this the distinction ceased to exist, as they did when the Nazi attack fell upon Anglo-French imperialism. Had the Nazi aggression not been a potential danger to the Soviet had it taken the form of expansion at the expense of some other imperialism, it would have been frankly an imperialist quarrel and neither the Soviet nor the proletariat would have made the distinction that were made for the reorientation of the entire proletarian strategy and tactics. Yet these distinctions were fundamental for the proletariat in the given situation. They were fundamental to defeat the aggressors of the Soviet, to rally the peoples to overthrow the common danger, protect the proletarian State against encirclement.

They took account of the innumerable contradictions among the bourgeoisie and the imperialism. Peace, Democracy, etc. were slogans

*The Defence of Peace  
and Democracy*

with which the proletariat was defending its most sacred trust, the USSR, defending itself against the conspiracy of the most reactionary sections of the world

bourgeoisie, to take a stride forward later on. They had not developed a sudden faith in bourgeois democracy, discovering new absolute values in it with the rise of fascism. Nor were democracy, peace, independence of smaller nations mere devices to cheat the people into supporting the USSR. They were genuinely meant, because ON THEM DEPENDED THE ABILITY OF THE PROLETARIAT TO DEFEND THE GAINS OF THE NOVEMBER REVOLUTION AND TO MOVE FORWARD. IT WAS FRANKLY A QUESTION OF CLASS MOVING AGAINST CLASS, THE USSR, BY POINTING THE COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET AND OTHER PEOPLES AND NATIONS, IN CURBING FASCISM AND MAINTAINING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY—THE COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY INTERVENTIONISTS PREPARING TO SELL DEMOCRACY AT EVERY STEP, THE INDEPENDENCE OF NATIONS AND PEACE, TO PREPARE FOR THE GRAND ASSAULT. Only in the light of this class situation, only in the light of this tug-of-war between



classes can the past be understood correctly and the subsequent developments mastered. The fulcrum of the proletarian policies has been and will be the defence of the proletarian state. Distinctions between bourgeois states, between two types of bourgeois dictatorship—the fascist and democratic—become valid only in the context of their attitude towards the proletarian state. Otherwise democracy is bourgeois democracy and nations and states are either bourgeois or proletarian.

9 In short, the proletarian strategy at this period was the isolation of the main enemy of the international proletariat. The

*End on the Main*

*Enemy of Mankind—*

*Fascism*

main enemy of the proletariat is that section or sections of the bourgeoisie which take a lead in organising a direct assault on the Soviet. When the national

enemy differs from the main international enemy as found above, the proletariat concentrates its fire on the latter and its accomplices, attempting to compel its national enemy to do likewise. The proletariat does this just because it recognises no national barriers, no nation, no fatherland except the Soviet. Proletarian unity and proletarian internationalism subordinate national considerations to international ones. They determine the pace, the extent and intensity of their warfare against their own bourgeoisie by the pace, the extent, etc. of the international struggle. The proletarians measure their national advance by the general international advance of their class. For them their own bourgeoisie or governments are only a part of the world bourgeoisie just as they themselves are only a part of the international army. Where this international army is to deliver its death-blow at any given time, where the fire is to be concentrated is determined by the class situation in the world as a whole, whether the proletariat scattered in different countries is to deliver its smashing blows simultaneously against the bourgeoisie in all countries or

*True Meaning of*

*Internationalism*

whether it is to concentrate its fire internationally on one section rather than on another is a question of the concrete situation in which the proletariat finds

itself, on the correlation of *CLASS FORCES* in the world. This is the full meaning of internationalism, of international unity. The

proletariat singles out its main enemy. if that is possible, isolates it completely and defeats it. For this purpose it enters into alliance with sections and states of the bourgeoisie, who are driven towards it by their own contradictions. By these tactics the proletariat unites its own ranks and divides those of its opponents. The singling out of the main enemy, his isolation, is the Leninist strategy adumbrated by him on several occasions (see Stalin's "LENINISM", conditions of the successful revolution, description of the two phases). *FAILURE TO SINGLE OUT THE MAIN ENEMY ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT, FAILURE TO RECOGNISE THE MAIN ENEMY IN THE ENEMY OF THE SOVIET UNION, FAILURE TO DECIDE OUR IMMEDIATE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NATIONAL OPPRESSOR IN THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING IN TERMS OF HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USSR—IS TO JOIN THE MOST REACTIONARY SECTIONS FOR AN ASSAULT AGAINST THE SOVIET, TO ENCOURAGE A COMMON FRONT AGAINST HER, TO BE GUILTY OF BOURGEOIS-NATIONALISM, IS TO BETRAY THE PEOPLE INTO THE HANDS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY GANGS*

10. Throughout the years preceding the outbreak of the Second Imperialist War, the proletariat then was following the strategy of isolating the main enemy. As a class, it waged a world-wide struggle against the counter-revolutionary vanguard of the bourgeoisie. It was enamoured neither of bourgeois-democracy nor of this or that bourgeois state. It supported one or the other only in so far as it helped it to defend socialism, the proletarian state—the only guarantee of its final liberation. Not for a moment had it laid down its weapons of class struggle. On the other hand, with sharpened and finer weapons, it was leading its grand counter-assault, whether it had first driven foreign imperialism out of its country or not. If that assault had had materialised, it would have had to join even if it had not been nationally liberated. Thereby it would have hastened its own liberation both as a nation and as a class, for the assault would have weakened the world imperialist system and made the world safer for proletarian socialism. There could be no exceptions

*Anti-Fascist front and  
Liberation of Colonial  
Peoples*

in proletarian ranks. The immediate enemy of the Soviet was their main enemy. These are fundamental points to understand the subsequent discussions.

### **Situation on the Outbreak of the War.**

11 The grand assault planned by the proletariat did not materialise. In spite of temporary successes—popular fronts, etc.—

#### *Reaction Scores*

the proletariat in capitalist and colonial countries failed to unite the ranks of the people and isolate the most reactionary elements. More and more these elements in Britain led by the Clyveden Set encouraged Hitler in his aggression, furiously hoping for the final result one by one they tore down treaty guarantees, the Franco-Soviet Pact and continually egged on Hitler with incendiary incitement. Step by step, the proletarian state was isolated and stood alone among the states of the world. The situation before the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was the most serious since the days of intervention. It was a question of touch and go, and the interventionist war would have started. Standing alone in this menacing situation the Soviet saved the world proletariat by its counter-stroke of the pact. Only Hitler's fear of the armed might of the Soviet, his suspicions of other imperialist powers and the necessity of cheap victory made him abandon the path chosen by him and cleared by Chamberlain.

12 The Second World War arose as a result of the disruption of the counter-revolutionary front. This cardinal fact we must never

#### *Soviet Isolated*

forget. But if the front was broken, the isolation of the Soviet from the proletarians, from the peoples of the world, was never so complete. Finland and the Baltic States offered still more opportunities to poison the bewildered popular mind. Roosevelt pontifically named the USSR as the aggressor and Social Democracy in Britain joined the chorus. Never was the isolation of the Soviet so complete as in these dark days. Capitalist encirclement had failed, but it appeared for a time as if a people's encirclement had replaced it.

#### *The Second Imperialist War Breakout*

13 Arising under these circumstances out of the failure of the counter-

revolutionary designs, the war could only be characterised as imperialist. Its basic motives on both sides were imperialist retention or acquisition of territories for exploitation. Had the proletarian counter-stroke of isolating Nazism succeeded, the result would have been different with a different class alignment i.e. different type of war.

14 Hence overnight, all previous distinctions which were fundamental to the proletariat in a given class situation became opportunist. Many a Communist Party blundered into this opportunism by retaining the slogan of war on two fronts. They still appeared to draw distinctions between democracy and fascism when "democracy" was at war out of imperialist motives when "democracy" had declined to play even temporarily a progressive role by refusing alliance with the Soviet. Let it be remembered that alliance with the Soviet is contrary to the final and ultimate interests of imperialism, though it may appear to help immediately this or that imperialism. That is why it was not a war between democracy and fascism but an imperialist war which came into being because a democratic anti-fascist front was rejected. The war on two fronts virtually amounted to a demand for a national government to prosecute an imperialist war. The proletariat could never do that.

15 But this was not all. British imperialism—its ruling circles had been the main force behind Hitler. They declared war when Hitler refused to do their bidding. Any help to British imperialist war, any slackening of opposition to it, therefore amounted to pressure on Hitler to attack the USSR. It meant incitement to aggression against the USSR. Britain was now the main enemy who had broken the alliance and the people's fronts to make the world safe against Socialism. The world proletariat was to concentrate its fire on Chamberlain<sup>1</sup> and his gang, they were not to be misled by comparisons between fascism and democracy. If Hitler had broken down treaties, it was because Chamberlain had abetted him. If Hitler was fighting for still worse aims, it was because his counter-revolutionary aims had not been realised. Nazi Germany, however, did not become an ally. It remained potentially a next dangerous enemy. Hence the war as

*Britain the  
Main Enemy*

a whole was an imperialist one. In this situation, the singling out the enemy could be done not simply by denouncing the war as an imperialist one but by special denunciation of Chamberlain also who had made it possible by rejecting a pact with the Soviet.

16. The situation then at the outbreak of the second war was as follows :

1. The most reactionary bourgeois elements had succeeded in breaking up the developing democratic front against Nazism;
2. At the same time, their plans of hurling Nazism at the head of the USSR had failed, were smashed. Their dreams of completely exhausting both the Soviet and Nazi powers and for the partition of the USSR had been smashed
3. The dangers of a negotiated peace with an attack on Soviet as the basis had not yet ended. With the Chamberlain gang in power the danger was there. Yet it was increasingly becoming more and more difficult to attain the old objective of a counter-revolutionary front;
4. The isolation of the Soviet from the working masses and peoples of other countries was not only far more complete than ever before, but had developed into a hostility under stress of imperialist propaganda;
5. If the resurrection of the old counter-revolutionary front had been rendered more difficult; the danger of a single handed Nazi attack had not vanished. The Soviet had diverted the blow, not smashed it. The danger had only temporarily retarded. Everything depends on the development of the war.

### **The Collapse in Europe**

17. The Progress of the war staggered the imagination of the world. But these staggering developments themselves led to a new alignment of forces between nations and classes. Hitler marched from success to success. He finished Denmark and Norway, inflicting a severe defeat on

*Fall of France*

British imperialism and winning strategic points for his attack. But he received his most staggering success when he routed the combined French, Belgian and British forces, forcing the former to sign a truce with them. British imperialism was within one inch of defeat. Never was it so seriously and directly menaced as after the collapse of France. Hitler could no longer be treated with the same old indulgence. Instead of turning eastwards, he has turned westwards. He had smashed the most powerful ally of British imperialism. That ally showed unmistakable signs of turning into an enemy. Hitler has surrounded the British Isles, menaced its communications with the Empire and was angling for the French navy and the French colonial possessions to seal the doom of the Empire. His industrial resources and power had become bigger than the power of the British Empire with the accessions of French resources kept intact for him by the French bourgeoisie. Not a single military power was left on the continent except the hated USSR with whom the British imperialists had now to seek rapprochement to save themselves. What the popular forces could not achieve in the past seemed now realisable with the fire threat to British existence. Yes, British imperialism had to abandon its dreams of solving imperialist contradictions at the expense of the USSR and seek rapprochement with her.

18. The Soviet could not be expected to entertain proposals for helping one imperialism against another in an imperialist war. But

<i>Encirclement of the USSR</i>	it was no longer a question of pure imperialist rivalries. Finding herself safe on the western side, Nazi Germany turned towards the east, the Balkans, creating a
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ring of subsidiary States round the Soviet. The Soviet in the early days of the war had anticipated the Nazis in Finland and the Baltic States. But the ring continued. Rumania was taken. Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were subjugated. The defeat of the British forces in Greece and Crete effectively sealed the USSR. By driving the British from the continent, Hitler was making one front safe and avoiding a two-front war. The Soviet was to be struck in isolation, all the military power had to be concentrated against her. Hitler's expansionist aims were again directly threatening the USSR. Again, therefore, the question of the safety of the proletarian state was being raised and

raised in the context of the sharpest imperialist conflict—imperialism divided and at war with each other. Nazism no longer remained one of the imperialist powers threatening the possessions of another. It was rapidly hastening to destroy the proletarian state to satisfy its expansionist aims. Having struck at its rival on the western front, it now sought to clear the road for its final ambition by defeating and destroying the USSR. It was because of this that the Soviet could entertain proposals for a rapprochement. British imperialism was no longer the gatherer of world reaction. Its aim, for the sake of its own safety, could no longer be the immediate destruction of the USSR. On the other hand, its interests demanded the destruction of Nazism at a time when the latter was organising for an attack against the USSR

19. Consciousness of this swinging danger was seen in the statements of Soviet statesmen and activities of the Soviet. As far back as November 7, 1940, on the Anniversary of the November Revolution, Kalinin declared : “We are not disinterested spectators of the European war. We are vitally interested in its outcome,” a broad hint that the Soviet did not look with favour on Nazi successes. Statements that the Soviet was prepared to accept the challenge of any enemy also began to appear. The guarantees to Yugoslavia who had an understanding with Britain showed how keenly the danger was felt by the USSR. Finally the assurance to Turkey that if she were forced into a war and defended her independence, she would rely upon the neutrality and the understanding of the Soviet, demonstrated how the Soviet foreign policy was shifting and seeing in Hitler the main enemy.

### **Turning Point. New Alignment of Forces**

20. The situation then on the eve of the Nazi attack against the USSR was as follows :

*On the Eve of the  
Nazi Attack on the  
Soviet Union*

1. The USSR encircled by the Nazi power which had become a strong continental force with the entire European resources and the major part of the European manpower at her disposal.

2. Just because of these developments, it had become such a serious menace to British imperialism that its destruction had become necessary in its own interests.

3. A growing rapprochement ripening into an alliance had developed. Hitler tried to play the old game by offering the bait of an attack against the USSR. He sent Hess. What the proposals exactly were is not known. But that they were rejected, is obvious. One reason was that the old Chamberlain gang was not in power. The anti-German Churchill perhaps took a firm stand. Another reason was that Hitler was obviously asking for world supremacy. He obviously demanded a more or less complete hegemony on the continent, with the entire Europe at his feet. British imperialism could no longer allow him to expand even at the expenses of the USSR.

21 Those who thought that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact had made Russia permanently safe against a Nazi attack seem to think that the attack coming as it did immediately after the Hess proposals was a fructification of the Chamberlain policy. They argued that a Nazi attack could only come with the consent of Britain—willing or unwilling. They thought that Britain was playing the old game of an exhausting war, allowing both the Soviet and Germany to weaken themselves by it.

They forget both the concrete facts, developments in Britain and also general situation. They forget the situation on the eve of the Nazi attack, the tremendous changes in the powers of the two fighting imperialisms. For them, British imperialism must follow a fixed policy, irrespective of changes in the situation, irrespective of how it affects its own interest. It must be guided by an idealistic hatred of the Soviet and must be willing to sacrifice itself in the holy cause of the world bourgeoisie, surrender its world position and play the second fiddle to Hitler, for them no rifts exist in the ranks of the imperialist bourgeoisie, no cross currents, so that every section, every interest must pursue the policy of Chamberlain. For them only imperialist unity exists and not imperialist contradictions and that too, in the thick of the most brutal war.

22. The general situation has been already emphasised. Suffice it to say that the Chamberlain plan was based upon protecting British imperialism. It sought to protect the immediate interests of Britain, protect them in such a way that the ultimate interests of



world imperialism could be served thereby. This could be done only in so far as there was identity between the immediate and ultimate interests. The immediate interests not only demanded a diversion of the blow against the British Empire but it also demanded it in such a way as to weaken the powerful rival and adversary of British imperialism. Only a weakened Hitler, weakened to such an extent that for years he dared not challenge British imperialism, was to have a victory against the USSR and not only weakened but at the mercy of British imperialism.

### **Sharpening of Imperialist Contradiction**

As has been pointed above, after the colossal rise in Hitler's power in the eighteen months following the war, after his fantastic military victories, all these conditions had disappeared. Any more victories to him, even at the expense of the USSR would have meant still further rise in his power and resources. It would make Hitler virtually the master of the European continent. The British imperialist circles who had always poooh-pooohed the military might of the Soviet, were actually afraid that the Soviet Union with her vast industrial and agricultural resources might fall cheaply into the hands of Hitler. That, they knew, would seal their doom as a first rate world power. There was no safety for British imperialism in the event of such a development. The pursuances of the old policy would have meant sacrificing the immediate interests of Britain, surrendering its position as a world power to Nazi Germany. British imperialism, could not be so altruistic even for the sake of the world bourgeoisie. No bourgeoisie of any country sacrifices its national and imperialist interests to another for the sake of world imperialism in general. To the bourgeoisie, capitalism and imperialism are always present in the concrete form. Their national barriers are vital conditions of their existence. They will agree to sacrifice part of their interests, accept a subordinate position to their rivals only when they are immediately threatened by the proletariat of their own country, when the danger of revolution is imminent at home, when their very existence is threatened. Not otherwise.

Those who talk about an exhausting war forget all this, the history of the war, the basic fact that the war developments had

sharpened hundred fold the antagonisms between the imperialist powers. They forget that an imperialist war is nothing but the sharpest flaring up of the imperialist rivalries, which could only be solved by vanquishing the one or the other. Not to take imperialist contradictions into consideration in the midst of an imperialist war is to reject Marxism, to transform it into a dead formula, attribute the same unity to the capitalist class as is found only in the proletariat. Those who take this stand might argue that no doubt British imperialism could not enter into a conspiracy with Nazi Germany, because of the imperialist contradictions, but nonetheless it might decide to play the role of an onlooker hoping to strike at Hitler after he has been exhausted by the USSR, thus weakening both, that while it is not in conspiracy with Nazi Germany, it is still following the game of deliberately weakening both. This argument not only underestimates the depth of the imperialist contradictions but also Britain's understanding and fear of Hitler's mechanised warfare.

In the first place, Britain was not in a position to take risks. It knew that if Russia was beaten quickly, even if her industrial resources were captured by Hitler cheaply, that would practically seal the doom of the British Empire. With their first experience of mechanised warfare in France, the British were so panic-stricken with the lightning victories of Hitler that they dared not think of the luxury of being merely onlookers. They did not expect such a quick collapse of France and since then they could not be sure of anything. Not possessing flattering opinion of the Soviet military powers, the British were mightily afraid of a quick Soviet defeat—they thought she might not stand in the field till winter—and still more afraid of a peace between the vanquished Soviet and Nazi Germany, with the latter in possession of the industrial resources (a fantastic conception no doubt, but a genuine fear on the part of British imperialism) and able to turn against England with full force.

No, it had become impossible for Britain to play the game of an exhausting war without sacrificing her interest. It was equally impossible for her to play the role of a disinterested onlooker. She

*Fear of Hitler's Might*

*Britain can no Longer  
"Sit Back and Watch"*

had become a partisan. If there were doubts about her role, the USSR had sufficient elbow-room and would not have objected to Hitler's passage across Turkey.

### **Shift in the Ruling Crickles of Britain**

23. To turn to developments in Britain itself, it must be remembered that there was no unanimity in British bourgeois circles regarding Chamberlain's policy. What is the position of the Cliveden Set today? Does it continue to rule as before? The Cliveden Set and its leading light Chamberlain fell on evil days soon after the start of the war. A very influential section of the British Press and public opinion began to fear that the war was not conducted vigorously, it was a fear born of the appeasement policy of Chamberlain. The Norway fiasco put an end to Chamberlain and anti-German Churchill headed the new government (in a document on war coming from abroad, not exactly a document but oral report of it, we were told that the anti-German trend of Churchill might play a part and become important). He was the one man in the Conservative circles of Britain who refused to join the Soviet baiting campaign and the Cliveden Set. He was the only statesman in Britain who explained the Soviet absorption of the Baltic States as an anti-German move, refused to cover its real character in the interest of Soviet baiting.

Though Churchill was at the head, the Cliveden Set was still powerful inside the Government. Halifax still continued to be the Foreign Secretary. But the most influential sections of the Press seem to have been thoroughly fed up with the Cliveden gang.

*Cross-Currents  
in Britain*

The Press utilised every occasion to criticise the members and followers of the gang. For instance, when Halifax once referred to religion and God in his war speech the Press criticised him for being an impractical visionary and demanded practical and vigorous men. Under one excuse or another, the Press warfare continued, Churchill reshuffled his government on quite a number of occasions. Anderson and others were gone, the notorious Samuel Hoare was sent to Spain and finally Eden who was sacrificed to his policy of appeasement replaced Halifax, who was banished to the U.S.A. Halifax is still a member of the war Cabinet, but Churchill seems to have got rid of him once and for all. Anybody

who neglects the significance of these changes, especially in the context of the situation after the collapse of France, fails to take into consideration the important cross-currents in Britain, and the loss of position of the Cliveden Set, fails to note the most signal fact that the Cliveden Set was no longer in control of the government and that it (the government) was headed by a man opposed to the policy of the gang. It was after the installation of the Churchill government that serious attempts were made for a rapprochement with the USSR and after a time they were entertained. Britain agreed to guarantee the Soviet frontiers (Butler in the Commons)—articles were written, (King-Hall) saying that Britain was not interested in raising the question of the Baltic States. Soon after, from the Soviet side came the guarantee to Yugoslavia and the assurance to Turkey which barred Hitler's way into Syria.

If there was any doubt as regard where Britain stood in relation to the Soviet, Churchill resolved them on the out break of hostilities.

*Churchill Is  
The Appeaser*

On the day Hitler attacked Russia the British press declared Soviet Union to be a co-belligerent but not an ally. Churchill next day hit at all those who declared Russia to be a co-belligerent. He declared her to be an ally to whom every help was to be rendered. The "co-belligerent" slogan would have exactly suited the purpose of the Cliveden Set policy. It would have been stupid for Churchill to describe the Soviet as an ally and hit at others, he was hitting at the friends of Chamberlain not so much at the Press which was not aware of diplomatic developments, had he not meant his words. Considering the state of the British public opinion now the insistent demand for opening a new front it would have been suicidal to raise such hopes and make such commitments if they were not to be met. It was the head of the British Government again who overcame USA's hesitation to help the Soviet. The isolationists were raising a howl but Roosevelt was brought round, made to reply the isolationist propaganda—religious persecution in Russia, etc.—and finally the attempts to exclude Russia from the benefit of Lend and Lease Act were frustrated. Hesitations of America actually delayed the meeting of the Moscow conference, but in the end the Conference met and Stalin described the help of the powers as bountiful.

Of course, Britain has yet failed to relieve the pressure on

Russia by opening a new front on the continent, though it was openly advocated by no less a person than M. Litvinoff. The

*People's Pressure Needed  
to Overcome Churchill's  
Vacillations*

persistent demand in the British Press, even the Press nearest to the Government, to do something effective, the general dissatisfaction with the failure to relieve the pressure on Russia, and the strong advocacy in certain sections of the Press that a new front should be opened, warrant the conclusion that this failure is not a deliberate policy, but perhaps due to hesitation, or what is still more possible due to internal difficulties—both of which could only be removed by popular pressure. The possible explanation is that the failure might be either due to the hesitations of the conservative military General staff of the British Army or to the opposition to some influential Cliveden Set followers who still command a considerable following in the Conservative Party. In either case, only popular pressure strengthening Churchill's hands or overcoming his own hesitation will have to decide the matter. To conclude the relations established between the Soviet and Britain are those of common allies. British imperialism is not in a position to play the game of an exhausting war. It must support and actively co-operate with the USSR in destroying Nazism, for the latter has become an immediate menace to its own safety. It is the sharpened contradictions between Britain and Nazi-imperialism that now enable the former to consider the Soviet as an ally—an anti-Nazi ally. With the Anglo-Soviet alliance, the relations between the proletarian state and capitalist states undergo drastic changes. The capitalist encirclement is not only broken but two of the Biggest imperialisms range themselves on the side of the Soviet—one as an ally and another as a friendly power against a third—Nazi.

### **Concentrate Fire on Nazism—The main enemy**

24. By its murderous attack on the only proletarian state Nazism converts itself again into the main enemy of the international

*Soviet Defeat would be  
disaster for World  
Proletariat*

proletariat—colonial proletariat not excepted. This is the A.B.C. of internationalism and the sooner the proletariat in India understands this the less it will betray itself and the world

proletariat Nazism has attacked the fortress of Socialism, the consolidated gains of the November Revolution and thereby the entire international proletariat Nazism seeks to destroy the only free people in the world, enslave the Soviet proletariat and thereby create conditions of perpetual enslavement for all proletarians and peoples Nazism destroys the wealth of the Soviet Union, its big socialist industry, its proud engineering works and hopes to leave such wreckage behind, even if it is defeated as to create conditions for a counter-revolution The freedom of proletarians—the freedom of peoples struggling for liberty, the fate of nations are to day decided on the soil of the Soviet where the bloody war rages with unabated fury It does not require much Marxism to understand that if the Soviet is defeated, if the armed proletariat with all its vast resources is defeated, the international working class will remain enslaved for years, the post-war revolutionary rising crushed—both proletarian and colonial, crushed with the utmost ease, and the world will be made a safe place only for the most barbarous type of imperialism Even the result of a severe battering for the USSR will mean a disaster for the world proletariat It will immeasurably weaken the incubating revolutionary forces waiting to be unleashed The only guarantee of future revolutions, of colonial liberation, the only way to safeguard the cycle of revolutions, the post-war revolutionary upheavals, is a successful defence of the Soviet, the biggest armed revolution No liberation movement is possible on the ruins of the November Revolution The defeat of the USSR and its consequent absorption by the Nazis might weaken this or that imperialism but will immeasurably strengthen the world imperialist system Its defence, its victory, on the other hand, not only means the defeat of Nazism but an immeasurable weakening of world imperialism, a weakening which will be immediately seen in the post-war revolutionary movements Only the armed might of the proletariat—if it is saved from destruction, from battering—will guarantee these, guarantee the future of Socialism Nazism has called all this into question

<p>That is why Nazism is the main enemy of the international</p> <p><i>Soviet fight is the</i></p> <p><i>fight of the World</i></p> <p><i>Proletariat</i></p>	<p>proletariat and the peoples of the world</p> <p>and the war against it is a people's war</p> <p>The international proletariat has always</p> <p>regarded the Soviet people as the liberated</p>
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proletariat, the Soviet State as the proletarian state. The Soviet peoples are fighting not for "national preservation" but for existence as a Socialist state. They are fighting for nothing less than the preservation of Bolshevism and beating off the same old counter-revolutionary attack which was launched in the first interventionist war. If, at that time, anybody had said that the Russians were only fighting for national existence and hence it was not the concern of other proletarians, he would have been held guilty of promoting counter-revolutionary attack. If diplomatic exigencies entailed co-operation with classes who hate Socialism and prevent the Soviet leaders from appealing straight in class terms, there is no reason why the international proletariat should fail to see what the Soviet is fighting for. The fight of the Soviet people is the fight for Bolshevism, for the preservation of the November Revolution and—hence for the world. The international proletariat has never questioned this identity of interests. It is because of this identity of interests that the international proletariat has become a partisan in this war against the Nazis. It must wage this war from every quarter, leading the people coalescing with other classes and thus make it into a people's war against its immediate enemy—Nazis. It does not require much internationalism to understand that the fight of the Soviet is the fight of the international proletariat.

### **Win the People's War for All Peoples**

Stalin himself speaking as the head of the state—described the war, as a people's war, not only for the Soviet peoples but also for the peoples of Europe and America.

*It is People's War*

If it is a people's war for the peoples of the Soviet, Europe and America, it is one for us. Stalin did not describe it as a war

in the interests of the governments but of the *PEOPLES*. At the same time, Stalin could not use the strict proletarian phraseology and frighten other classes. Lastly, what is meant by the people's war? Is it for the Soviet only? The people, strictly speaking, is a multi-class entity. You can talk of a people's war in China, but not in Russia, where classes have been abolished. The expression "people's war" has only one meaning, the alliance of the Soviet proletariat with the people's of different countries to beat down Fascism. It can be a people's war only in this context. Stalin's

description of the war as people's war is a call for alliance with the Soviet proletariat. The Soviet people fight as proletariat and nothing else.

To agree theoretically on the same point, if it is not a people's war for all people's, what kind of war is it? Is it an imperialist war just because Britain is participating in it? The character of the war can only be judged by the main antagonism involved. Is that antagonism to-day imperialist rivalries, a redistribution of the world at the expense of this or that imperialist power? The issue is an attack on the proletarian state. The main antagonism is between the violent section of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as a whole. All other contradictions temporarily submerge, it is this main antagonism which dominates the situation to-day. The war is to decide whether the breach created by the November Revolution is to remain open, whether a further proletarian advance is at all possible. If this temporarily helps one imperialism against another, it nonetheless weakens it against the international proletariat. British imperialism has to purchase its safety against Nazi imperialism by strengthening the world proletariat. Irrespective of the fact that certain imperialist powers are interested in fighting Nazism out of imperialist motives, the issue involved is the safety of the USSR, an issue for the millions and makes the war a people's war, notwithstanding British participation.

To conclude, the war against Nazism waged by the USSR with the help of British imperialism, is a people's war for all peoples. It is the war of the international working class to defend Socialism and safeguard the future revolutionary movements. Nazism is the main international enemy and has to be defeated with the help of whatever allies the proletariat can secure. The enemy is to be singled out and fire concentrated on him. By winning this war, by supporting and extending the war effort of their bourgeois governments in this war, the proletariat does not compromise with it, but co-operates with the USSR and defeats the immediate enemy of the working class.

25. The proletariat not only wants to win this war but win it quickly. It must thank its stars that the march of events have broken the encirclement, heave a sigh of relief that it has allies in powerful sections of the bourgeoisie itself, that conditions exist which will bring out a victorious Soviet without exhausting her too much,



provided the proletariat in all countries know how to make their own governments prosecute a vigorous war. Those who shrink from this task, concentrating their attention on their own national enslavement, virtually demand the isolation of the USSR from all powers so that the proletariat and the oppressed nations may have the luxury of not co-operating with their own governments. Instead of jubilation that the world front is broken, there seems to be moaning in their ranks which will put a Chamberlain or a Hoover to shame.

**HISTORY GIVES ONLY ONE MESSAGE TO THE  
PROLETARIAT: WIN THE WAR QUICKLY  
FOR THE SOVIET—DEFEAT NAZISM  
WITH THE HELP OF  
ITS FORMER ALLIES. THAT IS THE ONLY  
GUARANTEE OF YOUR LIBERATION**

**British Imperialism—British and Indian  
Proletariat—National Liberation**

26 Just because the issue is between the proletariat versus Nazi imperialism, the British proletariat and with it the Indian proletariat draws distinctions between the two, declaring Nazism to be the main enemy. The proletariat knows that British imperialism is actuated by imperialist motives but that does not alter its objective role in so far as it is faced to help the USSR. Taking advantage of these intense imperialist contradictions, the British proletariat extends its support to its own bourgeois government, demands changes only where they are necessary for a vigorous prosecution of the war and forbears from raising immediately the issue of capitalism versus proletariat on national plane. It does not raise the slogan "Convert the war into a civil war", for the war is no more an imperialist one. It knows that it is nationally enslaved in spite of democratic rights and a parliamentary government. It is good to remember that bourgeois democracy is another name for proletarian enslavement. There is as much distance between proletarian freedom and bourgeois democracy as between democracy

*Can we Say "Right"  
for British Workers  
but not for Indians?*

and imperialism in the colonies. If the British and American proletariat were to declare war against their own bourgeoisie—a civil war—they will play the game of the Cliveden Set and the Isolationists.

It is stupid to think that it is right for the British workers to support the war, for they are “Free”. They are not free “Right”, because they have got democracy? No. If the war had not been for people’s liberation and the role of British imperialism in this war had not changed, it would have been the height of opportunism to support it.

It is just because the international role of British Imperialism has temporarily changed, it is just because distinction could be made between Nazi and British imperialism in view of its alliance with the Soviet, that it becomes the revolutionary duty of the British Communists to concentrate fire on Nazism and not on their home made imperialism. But for this reversal of roles, the British workers could not have supported “its own government” in the war, not withstanding the “democracy” in Britain.

*To draw distinctions between the British and Indian workers on the score of democratic right, etc. is to be guilty of breaking the international front and of failure to understand the international class interests which convert the proletariat into partisans of the war.* It amounts to judging British imperialism from the standpoint of the nations, not from the standpoint of its immediate role in connection with the international proletariat. Those who seek to draw these distinctions, for them a fine prospect in internationalism opens. American and British workers forge weapons to be sent to the Red Army, the bulwark of international Socialism. In the name of that same internationalism, the Indian workers, the proud followers of the International blow up these weapons and destroy them!

27 What then about India? Should the Indian proletariat refuse to join this battle, because it is even the

*International and  
National Task  
Indivisible*

most elementary rights are denied to it? The Indian proletariat should not allow itself to be deluded by such false nationalist considerations. As a part of the

International, it looks upon the USSR as the only fatherland. Apart from this, it really has no fatherland. Its defence is the most sacred, the most vital task. It fights for national freedom. It fights for

national freedom to secure international freedom for its entire class. Its international freedom hinges on the safety of the USSR. National struggle is only a part of the international struggle and not *vice versa*. All these years its national and international enemy was personified in British imperialism and therefore, it found no difficulty in accepting internationalism. But it is now called upon to make a new turn, just as the Communist Parties were, when they had to give up the slogan of war on two fronts. Its international enemy, the main enemy, stands separate from its national oppressor. The latter temporarily allies himself with the USSR, the bulwark of Socialism. It is called upon to direct its fire in unison with the so-called "free" proletarians of capitalist countries, taking help from whatever quarter it comes. Its aspirations for national freedom will not be worth a farthing if the USSR goes under or is battered too badly to raise its head for years. Its international pretensions will stand exposed if it fails to single out the main enemy, fails to regard the winning of this war as its fundamental task. It will not only have buried the banner of international freedom but if Soviet Russia is beaten or battered, it will have immensely strengthened world imperialism and with it the British Empire as well and ended all chances of national liberation. Remember if Hitler is able to smash Russia, these reactionary circles might again raise their heads in England and try for peace. And Hitler will offer them many concessions. Britain will accept defeat and sue for peace. What the Indian Party must understand is that the main dominant antagonism of the immediate present is the world proletariat versus the Nazis. Just now the antagonism between the colonial masses and imperialism is not the dominant, decisive antagonism. Therefore, in order to *WEAKEN AND UNDERMINE WORLD IMPERIALISM DEFEAT AND DESTROY NAZISM IN CO-OPERATION EVEN WITH BRITISH AND AMERICAN IMPERIALISMS. UTILISE THE ALLIED ROBBERS AGAINST THE GERMAN ROBBERS HERE IN INDIA*—that must be the slogan of the hour. The Indian proletariat must be prepared to defeat its international enemy and thus weaken world imperialism and thereby its national oppressor also, on fields other than the national one, because the conflict has shifted elsewhere. The indivisibility of our movements must be understood. In doing this, we will not be laying down our weapons aiming at a truce with imperialism but only shifting our struggle to new centers, new

arenas from where we expect to give a blow to our international and national enemy as well. For, the defence of the USSR will weaken the world imperialist system and with it British imperialism as well. USSR represented a far far wider breach than mere national independence of India and before that breach civil liberties etc are a mere drop in the ocean. Our national enemy is forced to ally itself with the Soviet because of the immediate menace of Nazism. We must exploit the situation, for this alliance if it leads to a successful defence of the USSR, will immeasurably weaken British imperialism even more than a Nazi victory against it. Only people who are completely impervious to all international appeal will consider this attitude to be cooperation with imperialism, will fail to see the proletarian internationalism side and shrink with horror from a positive attitude towards the war hugging to their breast the slogan of national independence—the only remnant of their erstwhile internationalism. Let there be no doubt that by declaring the war as a people's war the Party will not strengthen British imperialism but strengthen the world proletariat against imperialism as a whole and thus weaken every section of world imperialism as against the working class. Bourgeois-nationalism can afford to ignore the call of the Soviet the proletariat *CANNOT*. Bourgeois-Nationalism can afford to win a few rights before they agree to support the war, the proletariat *CANNOT* afford to do that when its entire future and past are called into question. *International as well as national duty demands this of the proletariat*. Anybody who thinks that the national revolution is safe with the Soviet in danger, that it is not being attacked in Russia deserves a permanent membership of the Indian National Congress or of the C S P at least.

28 The Party of the proletariat in India therefore must positively

*"Win the Peoples' War"*  
*Movement Campaign*  
*of Explanation*

intervene in this war, declare it to be a people's war and strain every nerve to win it and win it as quickly as possible, before the USSR and its glorious achievements of successive five year plans are destroyed and sacrificed to the Nazi hordes. It must, therefore, initiate and lead a "Win-the People's War" movement in India on the basis of immediate and effective aid to the USSR in men, money and materials, equipment and weapons. It must carry the slogan

to the people, explain what is at stake and so popularise the Soviet as to effectively bar the way against a reversal of the present policy of aid and alliance of British imperialism. It would find no difficulty in explaining to the masses its reversal of the policy of opposing war, provided it explains in the clearest possible terms that on the outcome of this war depends the existence of the Socialist movement, the liberty of nations—great and small, and an anti-Nazi victory will inevitably lead to the weakening of the system under which one nation dominates another and exploits it. The guarantee of this is the Soviet Union which stands like a rock to defend human liberty in this titanic struggle for the peoples and proletarians of different countries, for the peoples of Britain and India and the proletarians of Britain. (We must learn to appeal to the British workers and people) We are called upon to liberate others before we can liberate ourselves. And we will not bar the way towards other's freedom just because the British Government denies our rights, just because the conscience of the British proletarians and people is not yet sufficiently roused to do justice to the claims of the Indian people. We are not giving up our right to national freedom but we don't wish to visit the sins of the British Government on the peoples of Britain and the world. For we know that their success, the success of the Soviet, cannot but bring our liberation nearer. Coming forward with this declaration of policy, the Party must launch a vigorous campaign to aid the Soviet Union and win the people's war (care should be taken not to make Soviet Defence propaganda a mere peg to hang anti-British agitation. On the other hand the fullest possible advantage should be taken of the community of interests between the British and the Indian peoples on the question of the present war. Transform the alliance between the governments into a peoples' alliance of the Soviet, British and Indian people) *The Party, therefore, lays down conditions for supporting the war, for supporting the USSR. Once having declared the war to be a people's war, it cannot make its support conditional. Those who think of helping British imperialism can think of conditional support. Those who think of helping the USSR cannot.*

79 But that does not mean that the Party ceases to demand civil liberties, democratic rights, transfer of defence to Indian hands, Indianisation of the Army, National Government at the centre. The opposition of the Government to these should be criticised as lack

of trust in democracy, and above all, as impeding the war effort

*Struggle for People's*

*Demands & Rights*

*—Part of "Win the*

*War" Movement*

of the Indian people to save other

nations, especially the USSR OUR

CRITICISM MUST BE BASED ON OUR

DESIRE TO WIN THE PEOPLE'S WAR

AND NOTHING ELSE India can save the

British people and the USSR, increase their war efforts hundred fold. ONLY if the bureaucracy ceases to bar the way—this should be our criticism. Side by side, with this, the Party must carry on a ceaseless warfare against profiteering in trade and industry, against high prices and government's failure to control them, against jobbery in the Supply Department, against the European monopoly of special posts created for war purposes. It must declare that it will not be a party to the fleecing of workers and peasants while the wealth of wealthy remains untouched. It should demand a drastic cut in salaries of Government officials drawing more than 1, 000 or 5, 000 rupees per month or in the alternative, compulsory contribution of one month's pay for war purposes. It must demand drastic curtailment of industrial profits limiting it to only a small percentage, adequate dearness allowance for all industrial workers and increase in wages where they are grossly low. In the interest of the peasants, the Party should demand stoppage of all debt realisations till the end of the war, as also rent increase and evictions, machinery to see that the peasant realises at least partially the benefits of the rise in prices and control of prices of manufactured articles bought by the peasant. The Party should not hesitate to engage itself in these skirmishes, which seem to be looming ahead. Without these we can neither enthuse the masses nor vitalise them to take their proper share in the defence of the USSR, in the "Win-the-War" movement. Without these the war effort will not be democratised and effective. The masses will be sharing a one-sided burden and the power of vested interests will increase. Without these the government cannot be kept on a straight path. At the same time the Party must be ever ready to compromise. We do not want disorganisation of the war effort. The struggles are not intended to hamper war effort. They should not degenerate into anti-war rallies. In so far as they are rendered necessary, we lay the blame of the door of the bureaucracy and always show our willingness to arrive at a just compromise. These struggles for economic and

democratic rights must be regarded only as a part of 'Win-the-War' movement and nothing else. They are part of carrying the war to the masses, of helping the USSR. They should not degenerate into attempts of petty national advance at the cost of international advance. The main slogan of the Party therefore, is *WIN THE WAR*

30 (a) If the Party has already not taken a decision to change its policy it will find it difficult to work up enthusiasm three months after the Soviet-German conflict. The various stages, therefore, will have to be covered quickly. Open the campaign with the general declaration and changed characterisation of war. Immediate slogan: Open a new front. Demonstration. Start Soviet Aid Movement. This should begin with campaigns to collect money for medical supplies and rise in crescendo ending in big campaign for money to purchase armaments. The contribution may be symbolic when you take gigantic amount into consideration. But that does not matter. Locally or nationally to raise money for a plane or more will not be difficult for the workers and their sympathisers. The campaign should not take the form of only pro-Soviet propaganda. The propaganda should emphasise the community of interests between the British and Indian peoples, between the British and Indian proletariat, though main attention will be given to the Soviet identity of interests, etc. Socialist State, etc. among the workers. This should conclude the first stage with "Open a new Front" slogan in the forefront and propaganda among the recruits.

(b) To forge a link between the British and the Indian proletariat and the people's contributions should be raised from Trade Unions for relief of British sufferers from air raids etc. If possible, contributions to be sent through British Trade Unions. In passing, the importance of contact with British labour must be mentioned. This should be established through the AITUC.

(c) Having concretely shown its interests in war, the Party should gradually unfold its demand for more equitable distribution of war burdens, democratic rights, National Government, etc. as mentioned above. Not that these should not be mentioned earlier but they can be effectively tackled in the process of building war effort.

(d) Keeping to the forefront the slogan of "Help the Soviet. Win the War", the Party should undertake for propagate of quicker and better production in war industries. The offer to increase production should be backed by demands for recognition of unions, for recognition of shop and mill committees, dearness allowance, etc. The failure to develop machine and armament industries should be criticised as the selfish fear of the British capitalists.

(e) The Party does not join sham organisations like the A R P but criticises them by reference to what is urgently needed to be done for the Soviet. The Party may propagate for local national defence corps to be given military training by the Government. The Party goes for direct recruitment as soon as the prospects of a new front are there. In the meanwhile, so long as the Government fails to aid the Soviet effectively, the Party criticises and works up terrific pressure. Remember British imperialism is not going to take risks. It is not even a popular front government but a national government. Only popular pressure in Britain which is developing, can force the government to take risks. Unless popular pressure is developed, and developed quickly in India also, nothing can be done. We cannot rely too much on British imperialism to help the Soviet. The criticism of Government must be made sharply in this respect.

31. It will be seen that the Party lays down no conditions precedent to our support to war. Our support or opposition is based on the character of each war and the class forces behind it. We did not agree to support the war in its first phase, the imperialist phase, under any conditions. "Only a free India will support the imperialist war". We never agreed to it, for our hostility towards it was based on international considerations, on the fundamental character of the war as such. We argued, the war would not become a democratic war, not an iota of change would be introduced, even if Britain consented to establish a national government at the centre, or made other far-reaching concessions. The same considerations apply to-day. If the attack on the USSR and the consequent Soviet-British alliance have not changed the inherent character of the war, then no amount of concessions whether civil liberties, national government and what



not, should influence us. On the other hand, they must be fought as imperialist traps to hooking us to participate in and imperialist, and consequently, an iniquitous war.

In that case, our position remains the same as before—irreconcilable hostility to war, total disorganisation of all war effort, fight British imperialism on the national plane to discharge our international obligations. You nowhere come to conditional cooperation under these circumstances. A general slogan of conditional cooperation in the war is a bourgeois slogan, with which the proletariat has nothing in common. The moment communists begin to talk about conditional cooperation in the war, it means or ought to mean, that they have inwardly altered the character of the war which can only be due to international considerations and developments.

This alteration in the character of the war, however, gives short shrift to the slogan of conditional cooperation. For it proceeds from general international developments and not from the peculiarity of this or that national situation. For the proletariat which takes its stand on the general international antagonisms of a given period, the war does not become people's war with a few concessions nor does it cease to be such, just because these concessions are immediately denied. It was Lenin who in connection with the right to separation of oppressed nations, said 'It is the fundamental duty of the Socialists of an oppressing country to stress the right of separation while it is equally the duty of the Socialists of an oppressed country to stress international unity'. Failure in either case will mean chauvinism according to Lenin. Never was there greater need to apply this teaching to the Indian situation and the position of the proletariat than to-day.

The attitude of the proletariat towards the international development of war is then independent of national considerations and concessions. Once you alter the approach of your understanding of the war, you cannot make it conditional on the grant or refusal of certain concession however necessary they might be as steps forward in the democratic advance of India. *Therefore a general support to war when we regard it as the people's war, a war for the defence of the USSR, must be given irrespective of any conditions.*

32 But as has been made plain, this is not the same thing as

accepting the imperialist steamroller. The manner, the extent and the measure of this support, the specific method of achieving it, the slogans, the withholding whenever necessary, i.e. not in the direct interest of the aims which we seek to achieve—all these are determined by international developments. We apply the screw when the international situation becomes easy for us, relax it when we find ourselves in a tight corner. We play this game of the hide and seek, this mobile guerrilla warfare. To-day we are the disarmed civilians, tomorrow the armed guerrilla bands. The struggle for democratic liberties, for civil liberties, for national government, etc. all came in here as part of this vigilant warfare, part of our campaign for victory of the USSR. We start organising the victory campaign without any conditions, but demand democratic rights to do more. We want to win the war on all fronts and to do that effectively. We want drastic changes here. But we do not make our general support, the declaration of our support, conditional on the grant of civil liberties, etc. We must win them in process of organising ourselves for international freedom. Only one warning is necessary : The *"WIN THE WAR" SLOGAN SHOULD NOT BE A MERE PROPAGANDA SLOGAN, A MERE PEG TO HANG THE CRY FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES, ETC.* IT IS A GENUINE SLOGAN, MEANT FOR SERIOUS PRACTICAL WORKING. The same guerrilla warfare will have to be conducted in the economic field—readiness for compromise, to promote war effort, again resisting being made the cat's paw.

Along with this is the question of the widest possible popularisation of USSR, teaching the masses to think in terms of international politics. A big stride forward which will prove of vital significance in the coming difficult days can bar the way to British treachery if it is attempted. This, as you will see, differs from both conditional and unconditional support to war. The former fails to draw its conclusions from international developments and gives up the proletarian standpoint. The latter draws its inspiration from imperialism as in the case of M. N. Roy. It does not base itself upon the main antagonism involved in the war, sees in it only a struggle between powers—democratic and Nazi, and fails to approach the people, build a people's movement for the defence of

the USSR. fails to develop the governmental co-operation into a co-operation between the peoples, leaves the initiative to imperialism and brings grists to its mills Roy's stand has nothing in common with the proletarian stand It is the stand of the pro-Government element who supported the first phase of the war also as a democratic war

33 The slogan of conditional co-operation on the basis of civil

*Logic of Conditional  
Co-Operation*

liberties, etc is only an opportunist slogan, whether the character of the war has changed or not Its logical consequences are starting It means that

unless the liberties are granted, you must disorganise the war effort, organise sabotage, condemn despatch of Indian troops to Persia and denounce it as an act of wanton aggression against Persia, glorify Persian independence, and assert the right of each nation to follow its own foreign policy Let Russia have a new front in Persia, with the Persians resisting her with the aid of German officers We, the nationalists, will never agree to send troops even to help Russia, unless civil liberties are granted And if to-morrow Japan threatens to move against Russia, and Britain out of purely imperialist motives, moves (mind well) to check her, then again we must protest in the name of civil liberties This is nothing but bourgeois-nationalism gone mad, gone rabid With this logic, you must sabotage troop trains even if they are going to the Caucasus, disorganise all war effort, destroy, if possible, ammunition factories, organise railway strikes in Baluchistan from where help is being rushed to Russia—all in the name of civil liberties In short, join hands with the remnants of the Cliveden Set in England and the Isolationists in America and revive Chamberlain's ghost This is the logical conclusion of conditional co-operation if it is seriously meant If it is not seriously meant, it could be nothing more than the present Satyagraha which is a cover for surrender to imperialism It is the same attitude which regards the present war as one between powers, as an imperialist war, an attitude which is typical of the Congress Socialists

In short, conditional co-operation is full of gross opportunism and anti-Socialism, puts petty national considerations above international ones, drives a wedge between the international proletariat and the colonial masses, between the proletarians of

different countries, repudiates the heritage of the November Revolution and under the specious plea of not helping British imperialism, successfully helps Hitler against the USSR, isolated the latter from the colonial peoples and plays the game of Messrs Halifax, Hoover & Co. It is on par with Social Democracy in the last war, a worthy heritage for the C S P but not for the Communist Party

34 The logical conclusions of conditional support or no support, to which we have drawn attention, may be dubbed as an exaggerated and far-fetched picture, and recourse may be taken to the argument that our failure to support will not weaken Russia, for we will not be able to do much, or the argument that if we decide to support—What can we achieve? We, as a Party, are too powerless to do much either by way of raising money or by way of anything else. Why then spoil our name unnecessarily? If there are any who raised such arguments, they should be outside the Party. For the proletariat does not decide its approach towards fundamental questions on the basis of its own strength or weakness. Having decided its approach, it works for the intended result with all its might. It is therefore, always necessary—especially for a Party which is too weak to affect social events immediately—to realise the practical significance, the logical conclusion of its own slogans. We think that every one will shrink with horror from this logical conclusion unless he has completely strayed away from Marxism, unless he has ceased to understand anything of the international situation.

35 Those who attach too much importance to national government at the centre or some such slogan, make it into a sort of Magna Charta before which everything else, including support to the USSR, fails to bear the following in mind. Such a

*Demand for National Government not A Magna Charta*

government will no doubt enable us to organise the war effort better (and save our face with the aid of the bourgeoisie before the national masses), increase our liberties to carry on a campaign for victory. But remember, at the same time, the other side of the picture. It will be after all government of compromise between imperialism and the bourgeoisie. When it helps the war, it will do so in thorough-going bourgeois fashion, accepting all the imperialist arguments and salting them with national phrases, delusions, and dreams.

Soviet Russia will be merely one of the allies at best, and it will not hesitate to sell Russia or other revolutions when Britain finds it necessary and is prepared to offer them a handsome bribe. At such critical juncture, it will be the most perfect screen for imperialist machinations. The masses will be fed on narrow nationalism and the task of internationalists will now be an uphill one. If the proletariat fastens its chariot to the slogan of the national government, it will come to grief—all these arguments are offered not to stop the demand for such a government but to recognise the limitations in the international context and demonstrate the necessity of an independent approach toward the war. We will demand such a government because it offers us greater liberties to carry forward our main task of the period, because it makes a small dent in the imperialist armour. But there the matter ends. We will be again racing the country with the nationalist bourgeoisie for our aims (international), our understanding and organisation of the war.

### **Conclusion**

To Conclude, the advance of the Nazi hordes across the Soviet territory has created the most serious and critical situation for the world proletariat. The November Revolution is being attacked. The achievements of Socialist production are being destroyed. The past and future international and national revolution are in danger. The heroic Red Army is bearing the brunt of this attack against Socialism, against the freedom of peoples. It must be saved, helped at all costs. All national illusions must be cast aside. The Indian proletariat must raise the voice of the millions to protect the USSR, bring pressure on the Government to open a new front, organise concrete aid and participate in and lead the "Win-the-War" movement. It must declare the war to be its own affair, the affair of the people, and work for its victory tirelessly by taking all such measures as are immediately necessary, including recruitment. It must not hesitate to "co-operate" with government in the manner mentioned above. On the other hand, it should know that it is the government which is forced to co-operate with the Soviet, etc. The situation brooks no delay. Moscow is threatened. Its own chance of national liberation will come with a victorious Russia and with a weakened imperialism, facing colonial revolt. It must prepare for that day by beating off the present assault. To hesitate is to sell Marxism in exchange for bourgeois nationalism.

## II. Basic Tasks on the Nation Plane

1 With the development of the imperialist war into a people's war new tasks confront the proletariat in India. The separation of the main international enemy from the national one compels the proletariat to reevaluate the situation in India and take decisive steps to unify the national forces in a grand assault against the main enemy of the international working class of human liberty and freedom. The proletariat cannot do this without a searching analysis of the class positions and class interests revealed in connection with the present war—the people's war. The task of the proletariat in India is beset with monumental difficulties: for national oppression of the Indian people, the overwhelming distrust of British imperialism, the dominant prevalence of bourgeois-nationalist conceptions, on general backwardness of the Indian people and even the proletariat—all these prevent the Indian people from joining hands in any undertaking in which British imperialism is interested. This is especially so in connection with the war which was denounced till recently as an imperialist war and in whose conduct the bourgeoisie refused to participate, without certain assurance and concessions. Experience of the past and recent propaganda alike have taught the Indian people not to trust the bonafides of imperialism and to oppose any war venture in which it is engaged. Not looking beyond the national horizon, the Indian nationalists cannot conceive of British imperialism a progressive role in the international arena, cannot conceive of a war to which imperialism is a party assuming a progressive character, a liberating character.

Yet these difficulties have to be overcome by the proletariat to safeguard Indian and human freedom, to prevent the betrayal of the Indian people and the international working class. In approaching its task, the Indian proletariat must recognise the limitations of nationalism which is nothing but bourgeois nationalism and must realise this nationalism to be a reactionary slogan when it runs contrary to the international interests of the working class.

2 In the period of the imperialist phase of the war, our main slogan was uncompromising war against British imperialism, paralysation of war effort, general strike, armed insurrection. In the forefront was the slogan of national independence, national revolution. We, therefore, denounced the bargaining stand of the

national bourgeoisie who were not averse to helping imperialism on the basis of certain concessions and thus betraying the nation. We denounced the hypocritical satyagraha movement, which was only a continual reminder to imperialism that the compromisers were ever ready to sell Indian independence, provided the required price was forthcoming. Recognising in British imperialism the main enemy, not only of the Indian people, but of the peoples of all countries, the incendiary behind Hitler whose plans had fallen through, we concentrated our fire on it, on its likely allies, on the Indian compromisers. National and international duties coincided and the sentiment of the Indian people could easily appreciate the logic of the proletarian stand. The continued bourgeois betrayal, the paralysation of national opposition to war through Satyagraha, the complete collapse of the Congress organisation by placing Gandhi above it, prevented the Indian people from directing the blow against British imperialism. Had the proletariat succeeded in rallying the masses, had the bourgeois betrayal been prevented, history would have been different. Hitler's attack against the USSR is in no small measure due to the failure of the colonial masses to revolt. The proletariat and its parties were, however, too weak to prevent the betrayal and to defeat British imperialism.

3 With Hitler's attack against the USSR, the situation fundamentally altered for the proletariat. British imperialism, though remaining as before the national oppressor, had become an ally of the Soviet Union and therefore, of the international proletariat in defeating Hitler. The incendiary who had attempted to throw Hitler's barbaric hordes against the USSR was forced to ally himself with the latter to safeguard his very existence. The war became a people's war.

### **The Main Task of the Indian Proletariat**

1 With Hitler's attack on the USSR, the Indian proletariat is faced with the vital task of safeguarding the November Revolution.

<i>Main Task</i>	The defence of the USSR, the defeat of Hitler constitute to-day the only guarantee of the final liberation of the international proletariat and the freedom of all oppressed nations. Only on the basis of a complete defeat of Hitler—the spearhead of bourgeois counter-revolution, can the
<i>Defeat Hitler-Fascism</i>	

proletariat hope to march forward to new revolutions, socialist and nationalist. Only a swift defeat of Hitler can ensure for the European proletariats the armed support of the Soviet Union for the developing revolutionary wave: only such a defeat can throw the entire world imperialist system out of gear, enabling the colonial masses to raise the standard of revolt. To win the people's war and win it quickly is the immediate compulsory task before the entire proletariat

2. This main objective of the present period lays new task on the shoulders of the proletariat, tasks which must be accomplished

*From Alliance of  
Governments to  
Alliance of Peoples*

in an entirely new set of circumstances under a new alignment of class forces throughout the world. The people's war is not war between nations but the

mightiest class struggle ever waged in history. The contending parties are not imperialist rivals but the major classes in contemporary society, the advanced proletariat followed by the entire mass of proletarians and the most counter-revolutionary section of world imperialism—Nazi-Fascist combination. The outcome will decide whether Socialism to survive and extend at the expense of the bourgeois order or whether the latter is to expand at the expense of the Socialist world, thus strengthening world imperialism and nullifying all chances of national liberation. Hence the main urgent task of the proletariat is to lead a unified attack of nations and peoples against the main enemy of freedom, of international proletariat—Nazism. To unify the national forces in each country, to lead them decisively in this holy crusade against the counter-revolution, to overcome the vacillations of the ruling classes, to unite the armed might of the peoples and the proletariat for the immediate defeat of Hitler—these form the basic tasks of the present period. Here lies the centre of the mightiest class struggle in history.

3. In waging this class struggle, organising his assault of the peoples and nations of the world, the world proletariat and together

*A New Alignment*

with it, the Indian proletariat finds itself in the most favourable circumstances.

Ranged against Nazism are not only the peoples and the proletariat of the world but also the two mightiest



powers who are driven to an alliance with the USSR with the defenders of the November Revolution by intense imperialist rivalries. The proletarian State has not only broken the counter-revolutionary front of encirclers but also has secured allies in the powers who formerly devoted themselves to this unholy task of encirclement.

The task of defeating Hitler, the task of organising a people's assault against the main foe is thereby rendered easy of accomplishment. The proletariat in India can never afford to forget this cardinal change in the alignment of class forces. Its national enemy is in alliance with its international vanguard, an exceptional situation which enables it to take a direct and positive part in the fiercest struggle being waged on the socialist soil of the USSR.

4 This fundamental change in class alignments demands a temporary revision of slogans and platform to forge the unity of

*Demand's Revision  
of Slogans*

the Indian people. In the phase of the imperialist war the proletariat despite the treacherous role of the national bourgeoisie, strove to lead the national assault against British imperialism on the basis of opposition to war, general strike, armed insurrection and complete national independence. The main objective of the national assault was British imperialism, the gatherer of world reaction. To-day, however, the situation has completely altered. The fate of the world imperialist system no longer depends on the blows given to it in India but on those given to Nazism in the USSR, by the combined might of the peoples of the world and of Anglo-American powers. The proletariat, therefore, must temporarily withdraw its former slogans and unite the national forces on the basis of a new platform for the international war against Nazism. When immediate, effective and direct aid is required for the revolutionary war in the USSR, the proletariat cannot afford to neglect the biggest organized force in the country, the Government, which is interested in the defeat of Hitler.

5 The task of the Indian working class, therefore, becomes extremely complicated. It has to build a united front of the various elements and classes in the Indian society—a united front which

extends to the foreign bureaucratic government, a united front in which the interests of the various classes—the Indian people and the Government—clash violently. History is grey: but green is the everlasting tree of life, quoted Lenin. History has thrown to-day in one common struggle the Indian people and its most inveterate enemy—British imperialism. Its armed might which holds the Indian people in bondage is at the same time a weapon of liberation (Stalin's speech). Under these circumstances, the Indian people led by the proletariat, must apply the logic of united front to imperialism—the same logic which they applied to the national bourgeoisie all these days

### **Why Unconditional Support to War**

6. What is the essence of a united front? A united front, we must remember, is a coalition of classes temporarily thrown together for achieving or completing a given phase of revolution. It succeeds in so far as the various classes constituting it are prevented from advancing their specific class interests beyond the point required by the development of particular phase of revolution. It is the proletariat which prevents cross-firing, thereby enabling the people, the mass, to deliver a united and powerful blow against its immediate enemy.

In the fight for the national-bourgeois revolution, the proletariat seeks to coalesce the national elements, including the bourgeoisie, pushing them ahead against the imperialism, overcoming the vacillations and fighting the treachery of compromisers. It does not raise the banner of Socialism, its ultimate aims and refuse to have united front with the bourgeoisie. At the same time, it does not permit the bourgeoisie to sacrifice the national revolutionary interests in the name of its specific interests (compromise) or allow it to disrupt the united front by handing over the masses to the exploiters in the name of national unity.

7. The immediate revolutionary objective before the Indian people is the beating off the interventionist attack against the November Revolution and then pass on to a new proletarian offensive in Europe and national

*In the Same front  
with the National  
Enemy*

*Essence of  
United Front*

*Defend November  
Revolution—Our  
Immediate Task*

offensives in the colonies. To-day when the proletariat is on the defensive, British imperialism is its ally, but a wavering and suspicious ally who requires vigilant watching, an ally who would consistently attempt to safeguard his own interests at the expense of the people's war, i.e. a proper conducting of it. It is this situation which determines the slogans of the present period, slogans vis-a-vis imperialism and the people's war.

8. The defeat of Hitler is the revolutionary task, a task primarily of the peoples of the world, a historic task of the proletariat and the peoples of all lands. It is not a task in which we, the people are co-operating with imperialism, but one in which imperialism is forced to take sides with

*Anglo-American*

*Alliance A Windfall*

the Soviet Union. It is imperative to remember this, for ever and on doubts arise in the minds of certain comrades, doubts which land them into the opportunist advocacy of conditional co-operation in one form or another. Just as in the fight for the national bourgeois revolution, the proletariat unconditionally supports a revolutionary stand by the bourgeoisie and strives to make it consistent and more firm, so also in the present case, the proletariat regards the war as its war, as the people's war and welcomes the imperialist co-operation as a political windfall, a historic accident so to say. Let us again underline that the defeat of Hitler is the immediate revolutionary objective of the peoples, and Anglo-American co-operation only puts us in a strategic position to defeat our enemy. Thanks to this, the proletarian forces the world over are not divided and are able to concentrate their entire fire on the single enemy.

9. In this phase of the revolutionary movement, we have to march in alliance with the hated foreign government. What can be the correct slogans? Do we accept British imperialism as the leader of the people's war, do we accept its hegemony as Roy does? That would be the most opportunist surrender of the people's war, enabling British imperialism to betray any moment. This accidental ally is not a permanent ally even in the phase of the Soviet-German war. His dominant position in the alliance to-day is shaken and yet he is to be kept as an ally. To keep him as an ally it is necessary to withdraw the slogans of immediate national revolution, general strike, armed insurrection, etc. Complete independence as an immediate slogan which would only create diversion in favour of

Hitler, enabling the anti-Soviet elements in Britain to find excuses to stop aid to the Soviet. Attempts to put such slogans in serious practice will only throw British imperialism into the arms of Hitler giving credit to the Indian people of achieving what Hess failed to achieve

### **Securing People's Hegemony in the War**

10 But at the same time, the dominant position of British imperialism in the alliance—a position which enable it to monopolise all reserves and puts the Soviet at the mercy of imperial interests, must be shaken. We can never forget that it is British imperialist interests and these alone that have forced her to ally herself with the Soviet. So long as the initiative of waging the people's war fail to seize and convert the alliance of governments into a people's alliance, unshakable and unbreakable, so long does the danger remain of Britain changing her course to suit her imperialist interests, there remain the danger of an exhasusting war. And this is not the only danger.

The bureaucratic imperialist State is the most unfit organisation to lead and organise a people's war. Its intention are suspect. It cannot rouse the people to enthusiasm, cannot call upon the people to mobilise the national resources. It knows only one weapon—the official weapon of coercion. It can conduct the war by fleecing the poor and fattening the rich. So long as its dominant position in the alliance continues the full utilisation of the national resources and manpower are rendered impossible. In the very interests of a vigorous prosecution of the war which is to be won quickly if the armed might of the soviet Union and the socialist sector of production is not to be completely worn out, a government capable of rallying the people for the common revolutionary task is an indispensable necessity. The conduct of the revolutionary war cannot be left in the hands of imperialism. The initiative must be taken out of its hand and transferred to popular hands.

11 The national advance of the Indian people is, therefore, determined only by the requirements of the immediate objective of the present revolutionary conflict to defeat Hitler. No other considerations are valid except

*Conduct of War Must  
be in Popular Hand*

*Convert Government's  
War into People's War*

this one Not supporting imperialist hegemony, we raise Lenin's celebrated slogan "Strike together but march separately" Regarding the war as our war, we declare unconditional support to the war, irrespective of what the bourgeois nationalists decide to do At the same time, we take effective steps to do away with the imperialist hegemony in the people's war by demanding a national government, democratic liberties, release of political prisoners and thorough democratisation of war efforts, equitable distribution of war burdens etc The immediate compulsory task is to secure such national advance as is strictly necessary for converting the governmental war into an people's war, such advance as will effectively alter the correlation of class forces of nationalism and imperialism in the new alliance

### **Our Plan of Actions**

12 To unify the national forces the proletariat demands a new approach on the part of the Congress and the Muslim League towards the basic question of the war recognition of the war as the people's war It demands of the Congress withdrawal of the farcical satyagraha, support to war, resumption of ministries and a Congress-League agreement It asks the Congress to demand a National Government at the Centre, with 50% representation to the Muslim League (with Coalition Ministries in the provinces)—a national government pledged to conduct the war vigorously and democratically, a national government whose war aims must include complete alliance with the USSR and full aid, no aggrandisement, complete integrity of the Arabian countries, no humiliation of the German people and freedom to oppressed nations to choose their own form of Government The programme of the National Government must further include equitable distribution of war burdens, no deterioration in the condition of the masses, Indianisation of the army, building up of certain heavy industries, war industries, etc

13 The proletariat will accomplish a big victory if it succeeds in persuading the national leadership to declare in favour of war that will strengthen the progressive forces in Britain who are raising the slogan "Release India for Freedom" The biggest triumph, of course, will be a joint Congress-League declaration and a demand

for National Government The necessity for a Congress-League agreement cannot be understressed. It will be wrong to imagine that without a Congress-League agreement the full weight of the national forces can be gathered for the fundamental task of winning the war. A compromise based on the disruption of the Muslim League will only divide the Indian people and erect permanent barriers, besides causing diversion in the shape of riots. It will force the national bourgeoisie to rely on imperialism, to maintain their position and leave the initiative for war more in the hands of imperialism than of the Indian people.

### **Ours is an Independent Path**

14. Here it is necessary to draw attention to the fundamental differences between the bourgeois and proletarian approaches. The national-bourgeois looks upon the present war as a god-send, and will be jubilant over further Soviet reverses, rendering Britain's position more difficult. For the proletariat, it is a question of life and death struggle. The national bourgeoisie is thinking in terms of co-operation with imperialism; the proletariat is aiding the defence of the November Revolution. In the event of a failure of compromise the national bourgeoisie will continue to wait for further Soviet reverses, praying for them. The proletariat cannot afford to do that. Even if there is no immediate compromise, the proletariat must come forward with its slogan of "Win the people's war", demanding the opening of a new front, demanding more effective aid to the USSR and offering to participate in its organisation. At the same time it must sharply attack the government for its failure to concede the minimum demands, denouncing it as the betrayal of the Indian and British peoples. Through demonstrations, etc. it must popularise the war, rouse the anger of the people at the policy of the Government and popularise the slogan: "National Government to lead the people's war". It must try to create a serious situation for the government. In supporting the war and doing everything to relieve pressure on the USSR, the proletariat cannot afford to have any doubts. It should not allow itself to be misled by the hypocritical opposition of the bourgeoisie. Nor should it be panicky at the seeming prospect of isolation. A proletariat which aspires to lead the people cannot afford to pander

to the backwardness of the people when their future is at stake. No doubt the overwhelming national sentiment in the event of a failure of immediate compromise, will be against the proletariat for the time being. But so it was in the 1st war when Lenin took a "defeatist" position and Bolsheviks were hunted, so it was the case of the C P G B when it opposed Chamberlain's war against Hitler.

Those who advocate a "do-nothing" line till the bourgeoisie have reached a settlement, leave the initiative of the war in the hands of imperialism and advise the proletariat

*Our Line is Independent  
and One of Action*

to abandon the leadership of the people to the bourgeoisie. They are afraid of national isolation and therefore, advocate

international disunity in this hour of dire need. Failure to follow an independent path, independent both of imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, is to advise the proletariat to step aside from the international struggle and bury the banner of Socialism in the name of national unity. To those comrades we ask: Should we demand opening of a new front even if a compromise is not knocking at the door? If Indian troops are despatched to the Caucasus, should we oppose it and hold our approval till the bourgeoisie sanction it? Sending of troops to the Caucasus or opening of new front is just now at any rate governmental measures. Should we oppose them by saying 'We support war but not government's war effort'? The proletariat must reject these nationalist deviations and continue on the path of winning the war, removing every obstacle in its way. It is obvious that in discharging this task, the proletariat will have to wage a guerrilla warfare—political and economic, against the government—in the event of the latter's remaining obdurate. But that neither alters the basic attitude of the proletariat nor prevents it from active participation in the war effort, wherever it is urgently required. These tasks must be discharged and at the same time terrific agitation over the conduct of the war has to be carried on.

### **Unify the People to defeat Hitler**

15 At the same time it is obvious that weakly organised proletariat

*Unit the People  
to Win The War*

and its party cannot by itself carry the people with it. It is exactly because of this that the proletariat demands of the Congress a revision of its attitude towards

war and a unification of the national forces, though it cannot make its stand dependent on the willingness of the Congress. The proletariat cannot neglect the Congress which still continues to be the centre of political India. It has popularised the new approach within the Congress masses over the head of the Congress leadership, and therefore, it must demand a session of the AICC to revise the Congress policy. The demand of the proletariat for a national Government at the centre or some variant of it, for vigorous prosecution of the war, for a unified assault of the Indian people against Hitler cannot be easily achieved unless the Congress is won over to them. The proletariat must activate the Congress masses to demand these changes, must make them understand how vital it is to win this war in order to secure national independence, when the situation ripens, and face imperialism with a unified people ready to conduct the war in people's way. Not making its stand dependent on the bourgeoisie regarding it as the people's war, the proletariat must unhesitatingly jump into the fray, educating the people, bringing pressure on imperialism, if it remains obdurate and making serious efforts to win over the congress to its point of view.

16. The struggle of the proletariat, however, does not cease with the establishment of a national government at the centre. Such a government only creates preconditions for carrying the war to the people. Knowing the national bourgeoisie as we do, we cannot expect them either to popularise the revolutionary significance of the war, or to organise it on a democratic basis. The main task of building firm ties between the USSR and the Indian people, of preventing likely betrayal at the hands of imperialism, of safeguarding the revolutionary wave, of democratising the war, will fall on the shoulders of the proletariat.

## Conclusion

17. To sum up, the proletariat must lead the struggle for the people's war in India, by bringing the people in the common effort to defeat Hitler. Recognising an ally in British imperialism, it must advance such slogans as would secure the people's hegemony in the war, a hegemony to be secured by direct intervention in the war, by demanding a vigorous

*Fight for a Revision of  
Congress Programme*



prosecution of the war and forging mass sanctions behind it. To create mass sanctions behind this demand, the proletariat must agitate for a revision of the Congress programme demanding

- 1 Congress support to war and declaration of its war aims
- 2 Full aid to Soviet Russia and British democracy and full utilisation of national resources
- 3 Congress-League appeal to British people offering them help and demanding a national government.
- 4 Resumption of ministries, coalitions, even if demand of a national government is rejected for the time being. Such resumption will put the nation in a strategic position to bring pressure on the Government to concede the national demand, making it difficult to carry the war on its own, enabling the nation to carry a guerrilla warfare, increase its capacity, to organise positive aid to the USSR
- 5 Complete Congress-League agreement on the conditions given above, i.e. war, its conduct and aims

The proletariat must strive for these even if it is alone and educate the people to take their proper place in the conduct of the war. Not by holding aloof from the war till a compromise is reached, not by meekly accepting imperialist initiative, not by waiting for the bourgeoisie to give the signal, will proletariat be able to discharge its international and national tasks, but by forcing a compromise on imperialism if it is unwillingly, by concentrating the attention of the people on vigorous prosecution of the war, by rousing their anger at the imperialist failure and at the same time, by demanding and organising positive aid—open new front, etc. will the proletariat succeed in discharging its national and international tasks, secure people's hegemony in the people's war and put the nation in a far more strategic position when the time comes for a final reckoning with imperialism.

# RESOLUTION OF THE POLIT BUREAU OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA :

## THE ALL PEOPLE'S WAR AGAINST FASCISM AND OUR POLICY & TASK

1 With Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union, the character of the war is fundamentally transformed. With that act Hitlerite Germany became the main aggressor and enemy not only of the Soviet Union not only of the workers and the oppressed people of the Nazi occupied countries of Europe and Germany itself, but of the proletarians and peoples of every country. In this context the war conducted by British and her allies against fascist powers now assumes a new significance for the proletarians and peoples of all countries. Being a war aimed at the enemy of the international proletariat, against the enemy of the Soviet Union, it now becomes for the proletarians of all countries, an all-peoples war against Hitler-Fascism, and for the defence of the Soviet Union, the fortress of socialism.

### **Not An Imperialist War But A People's War**

2. It is necessary to clearly understand how this turn in the international situation and the war came about. The Second Imperialist war arose really on the basis of two main conflicts, the old conflict between the two imperialist blocs which was at the root of last war and the new conflict between the socialist Soviet Union and the capitalist world. The imperialist ruling class of Britain and America is trying to provoke the rival imperialist powers especially Germany and Japan against the USSR and then getting their imperialist conflict solved at the expense of the USSR. The Soviet

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*[Polit Bureau Resolution on World War II despatched to all Party Members under cover of Party letter No 56 dated 15 12 1941]*

Union and the communists realising the acute and imminent danger of the outbreak of an imperialist war and an attack upon the Soviet Union, were seeking to create a powerful world front of democratic countries against fascist aggressor countries, namely Germany, Italy and Japan. This front did not materialise because of the treachery of social-democracy which refused to fight against the reactionary intrigues of the pro-fascists in Britain and France. But all the same, the reactionary game of the reactionary rulers of Britain against the USSR also failed, thanks to the might of the socialist power. Hitler preferred to seek a non-aggression pact with USSR. Defeated in its reactionary diplomacy, British imperialism launched a war against Germany. It was the reactionary policy of the British imperialist of nourishing the fascists to make them attack the USSR that led to the sharpening of imperialist conflict which burst into Second World War. During the course of the 22 months of the war, that conflict was further sharpened due to the easy and decisive victories which Hitler won in Europe. Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union sharpened that conflict still further and to such a pitch that it (the war) was *qualitatively* transformed for the working class all over the world. British imperialists suffered another defeat in their reactionary policy and to throw overboard their anti-Soviet policy of the last 24 years and had to join the USSR as an ally, on terms of reciprocal aid, in their own interests. The camp of world imperialism was split sharply into two opposing camps in relation to the Soviet Union, in a manner as it never happened before. Hitler-fascism with its allies stood isolated as the main enemy of the entire progressive mankind. A basis was laid for the creation of a powerful anti-fascist people's front extending over the whole world and to its victory in the alliance of the USSR, Britain and America. The war now becomes an all-people's war against the worst form of imperialism, fascism and it becomes the supreme duty of the proletarians and peoples in every country to win.

### **What Proletarian Internationalism Demands**

3. The attitude of the Communist parties towards any war is determined by the Leninist principle of proletarian internationalism, by the class character and class aims of the government conducting the war. Communists support all just wars, i.e. wars that are not

wars of conquest but wars of liberation waged to defend the people from foreign attack and from attempts to enslave them or to liberate the people from capitalist slavery or lastly to liberate colonies and dependent countries from the yoke of imperialism. They oppose all unjust wars, i.e. imperialist wars, wars of conquest waged to conquer and enslave foreign countries and nations. There is one single principle which determines the attitude of Communist parties towards war and that is—proletarian internationalism, united struggle of the workers of the world against imperialists. It is impossible for all Communist parties to conduct a resolute struggle against imperialist wars to the point of revolution and the overthrow of their own bourgeois government. The policy of all the Communist parties towards the present war in its imperialist phase was guided by their internationalism, by their duty to further cause of world revolution and of the defence of the USSR, its base, and not by any local or national considerations. Every Communist party sought to mobilise the workers and the people under the slogan *END THE WAR* and to overthrow the government in its own country and replace it by a people's government which would renounce imperialist aims and join up with the USSR in fighting for isolating the remaining imperialist aggressors. Similarly, as soon as the Soviet Union was attacked by Hitlerite Germany in the midst of the imperialist war, the Communist parties were required to recognise that the war waged by Britain against Germany became at once a part of the defence of the USSR. They therefore have to support it and strive to wage it in such a way that it ensures soviet victory over the defeat of Hitler fascism. The Communist parties in all countries were required to recognise that Hitler fascism as the main enemy and the war waged by the USSR in alliance with Britain and America, was a war which had to be won by all the people in the interests of defending the base of the world revolution. This duty and attitude was imposed by the internationalism of our Party. No national or local conditions could render it invalid.

### **World People's Front Against Fascism**

4 In the 6 months which have followed Hitler's attack upon the USSR, a mighty people's upsurge has grown up in every country which is growing stronger, broader and more unified on a world plane every day. It embodies the growing will of the

workers and peoples in every country to destroy fascism, this vile curse of mankind, and to make an end of policies and systems which nourished it to fight this conflagration. It expresses itself in the extensive and heroic actions of the guerrilla armies and the peoples of the Nazi occupied countries of Europe which are assuming the form of a veritable people's war in Hitler's regime. It expresses itself in the powerful initiative and activity with which the British and American workers and people are forcing their governments to carry on unfalteringly the war against Hitler and render full aid to the USSR. It expresses itself in the new offensive which the united forces of the Chinese people are launching against the new aggression of Japan in the Pacific. This world upsurge which is the flesh and blood of the growing international unity of action of the workers and the people of all countries against fascism, is taking place under the influence of two dominant factors. The first is the split and the crisis in the camp of world imperialism, which has resulted in the isolation of the three fascist powers as the main international enemy, while grouping against it is a powerful anti-fascist front—headed by the USSR and joined by Britain and America. The second factor is the gigantic test which the Soviet people and the Soviet organisation—the product of 24 years of socialism and worker's rule—has stood as so no other people or State in the world has ever done in victoriously fighting back the brute might of Hitler-fascism. The Soviet people and the Red Army by their unparalleled heroism, by the invincible unity, by their indestructible socialist organisation, are leading and inspiring the people in every country to conduct a resolute struggle against the fascist aggressors, to take their destiny in their own hands. In short, we are living in a new period when the anti-Hitler alliance which came into existence because of the USSR and the quandry of the imperialist ruling class of Britain and America, is being transformed into a world front of the peoples against fascism. Under the stress of war and under influence of Soviet leadership, this common front against fascism in every country is being strengthened, the balance shifting more and more in favour of the people and against imperialism. The anti-fascist front in every country under the stress of the initiative and actions of the people, is becoming more and more a people's front. The people in Britain and America are

counteracting the vacillations and sabotage of the imperialist government in the vigorous prosecution of the war against fascism. They are fighting against their perpetration of the repressive and autocratic rule in the colonies. It is this awakening and activity of the broad masses of the workers and people in all the countries which strengthen the bond of unity between the peoples of the capitalist countries with the Soviet people and with the colonial peoples. It is these actions of the people which strengthen the international unity of the world anti-fascist front into a world people's unity and is making the world anti-fascist war into an all-peoples War for world liberation. Peoples of the world are moving into action with common will not only for the victory over Hitler but also for the victory of all the people's unity with the Soviet people and for a new and higher world order, based not on a new imperialist re-division but on the independence and democratic liberties of all the peoples. Such is the revolutionary importance of the new period.

### **Where And Why We Went Wrong**

5. The present PB adopted a completely wrong policy to the war in the present phase because it forsook the standpoint of proletarian internationalism and adopted unconsciously that of bourgeois nationalism. It failed to see that the character of the war waged by Britain jointly with the USSR and the duty of Indian proletariat towards it could not be determined by the relation in which the Indian people stood to Britain but by her relation to the fortress of socialism and to the main enemy of the world proletariat. We looked at the war from the point of view of narrow bourgeois nationalism and theorised that Britain was still conducting an imperialist war and that real aid to the Soviet people could be rendered by the British and Indian people only when a people's government was established in Britain and freedom was won by the Indians. We repeated parrot like phrases like "Hitler is the main enemy" and said that the imperialist war has to be completely transformed into a people's war, but stuck fast to the bourgeois nationalist slogan that India could help the Soviet Union only as a free country. We lapsed into all manner of speculations and refused to see the blunt fact that the war was already a people's

war because we did not look at the war from the standpoint of internationalism and from the standpoint of the defence of the Soviet Union. For us who stuck fast to the standpoint of narrow bourgeois nationalism the idea that the British imperialist government—the national oppressor of India—was no more conducting a war that was unjust and was now in the camp of progress, which was at war with the camp of world reaction, was difficult to swallow. Looking at the war situation according to our wishes and not as it actually exists, we failed to see that the very apparently unpleasant fact was the biggest defeat of British imperialism and its reactionary policy of 24 years and that it has placed the British and the Indian working class and people in an immensely strategic position, which it was their duty to utilise in the interest of world liberation and thus serve their interests as well. Proletarian internationalism always and every time, defines the tasks and policies of the working class and the people of each country in terms of the needs of the general struggle of the workers of the world against their common enemy—world imperialism. That is why it alone is the true guide for the Communist parties to evolve correct policies which at any given time correspond to the best interest of the people of its country while at the same time advancing the international struggle against imperialism as a whole. That is why by forsaking that standpoint, we betrayed not only duty to the socialist fatherland and to the world proletariat in the all-people's war against Hitler-fascism but also our duty to our own people. Failure to see that now it was a people's war led us to put forward the slogan: Our freedom first and then we will fight for the Soviet which was in practice the policy of Nehruism, which is subservience to Gandhian inactivity and sabotage of mass struggle and therefore, support to Rajaji's policy of surrendering to imperialism and betrayal of the people. *Refusal to recognise the war as a people's war, led to a virtual refusal to evolve a practical policy to mobilise the people for their free, voluntary and effective participation in the world struggle. A policy which in the given situation was the key to breaking the stalemate in India, to putting the people on their legs enabling them to play their part in the war of world.*

## **Guiding Lines of The General Policy**

6. What are the main considerations which must determine the practical policies of all Communist parties, which are everywhere striving for the defeat and annihilation of Hitler-fascism and the victory of the Soviet Union? In Germany and Nazi occupied countries of Europe, the main consideration is to do everything possible to overthrow the Hitler sponsored regimes, to sabotage its unjust war by every possible means. This requires in every country that the Communist parties pursue the policy of building the united national front of all those who stand for the defeat of Hitler. In this connection, it must be noted that the USSR has signed treaties of joint action with the former bourgeois governments of those occupied countries, which form the basis of such a united national front in countries like France, Yugoslavia, Norway, Greece, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The main consideration which determines the policy of the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries allied to the USSR, i.e. everything for the full and practical cooperation with the USSR. Everything for a quite and decisive victory over Hitler-fascism. They have to take note of the fact their governments allied with the USSR are yet bourgeois and imperialist governments, which enslave the proletariat at-home and the people in India and the colonies and which therefore, cannot be relied to pursue the policy of 100% aid to the Soviet Union, of ensuring people's victory over Hitler-fascism. The policy of the Communist parties in these countries is governed by the strength of the anti-fascist front in their own countries and the colonies. The policy is not one of overthrowing Churchill or Roosevelt government but of supporting it while developing popular pressure to shake off its vacillations and fight its sabotage. The policy is one of people's initiative and activity, of building a united national front of all those who stand for the defeat of Hitler, for the consistent and vigorous prosecution of the war in the interests of the people, for the 100% aid to the USSR. A ceaseless struggle of vigilance and exposure is carried on for the demands of workers, soldiers and the people, for opening the new front in Europe and to relieve pressure on the Soviet, for the freedom of India and the colonies so as to ensure their voluntary and free participation in the war. But the struggle is conducted in such a way that the main fire is concentrated upon the pro-fascists



behind the government, the fifth column and the main enemy of the people. It is conducted in unity with people's struggle for winning the war, for raising the production, for rendering 100% aid to the Soviet. The policy of the communists in these countries is governed by one slogan—win the war against Hitler-fascism and its allies for the peoples, for the Soviet. They concentrate their main fire against one enemy—Hitler-fascism abroad and his friends in their own country. They strive to strengthen one front—the world front of the people against fascism, demanding and fighting for the liberation of colonies ruled by their bourgeois governments.

### **Basis For Practical Policy In India**

The basis for the general policy which the Indian working class and the Indian people have to adopt is determined by the same general considerations that obtain for the British workers. The fact that it is an all-people's war against Hitler-fascism, the main enemy of the USSR and of the proletariat and the people, and that it has to be won in the interest of every people in the world, holds good for the Indian people, as much as it does for the British people. The fact that we are enslaved, that war is enforced upon us, that war effort is indissolubly connected with imperialist slavery does not affect a jot the obligation that rests upon us to strike together in common, with the other peoples of the world against the main enemy of mankind, and for the defence of the USSR. This duty which our internationalism imposes upon the party, viz. to mobilise the people, to develop such popular activity and initiative which will render the effective participation of the Indian people in the war in order to win victory for the USSR and for the other people. It is today the main consideration which must determine our practical policy. Our acceptance of the war, of a People's War, an obligation to win it, is unconditional and is not determined by the dictates or desire of the imperialist government. It is enjoined by the common discipline of the international proletarian movement which has now to concentrate all efforts on the defeat of Hitler-Fascism and its allies, for the victory of the USSR and of all the peoples.

This supreme task and the fact that Hitler-fascism and its allies are now the main enemies of the Indian people, and that the British government, our national oppressor is an ally, though a vacillating one in the world anti-fascist front—these now must determine the

immediate slogans and tasks for our struggle for liberation against British imperialism. This is the second consideration. The plan of action put forward in the "*PROLETARIAN PATH*" which was correct for imperialist phase of the war can no longer form our immediate task. Developing mass struggle against war in order to achieve the immediate overthrow of the British government cannot be our slogan for the present situation. For that would mean the splitting of the world front of struggle against fascism and its sabotage. We would be betraying the cause of our people as well. But this does not mean that our struggle against the imperialist autocratic government is suspended. On the other hand, it is waged in the new situation but in such a manner as to further and not to hinder the one course before us today—viz. to win the people's war against fascist powers, and to strengthen the front of the peoples against fascism.

In fact, the Indian people by going into action unitedly to achieve their free and voluntary participation in the people's war against fascism, will not only weaken the reactionary hold of British imperialism over India but will strengthen the cause of British workers and the British people. By adopting this positive line of action we would be defeating imperialism's reactionary policy to keep the Indian people out of the war. We would thus be defeating on a world scale the hindrances which the reactionary bourgeois circles in Britain are placing in the way of anti-fascist front developing into real people's front. By seizing the initiative to rouse the 400 million people of India to the consciousness of the supreme significance of the people's war, to the will and to actions for battling down the obstacles which imperialism places in the way of people's participation in the war, we will be advancing the cause of our own liberation and sealing a firm bond between the national front and the front of the peoples of the world. By this policy we weaken British imperialism and strengthen the Indian people as a unit of the world people's front against fascism.

Thirdly, therefore our immediate task becomes to organise a "*PEOPLE'S WAR MOVEMENT*" and rouse the people to the understanding of the supreme significance of this people's war against fascism, as a war of world liberation headed by the Soviet Union, to develop their initiative and activity, to participation in the war, so as to throw the full weight of India and her resources

on the side of the progressive forces. And in as much as the conduct of the war is in the hands of the imperialist autocracy and the war effort and civil defence is entirely in the hands of irresponsible bureaucracy, the people's movement of winning the war has to be developed as a series of struggle and skirmishes on every front, to smash the fetters which today chain the people's initiative.

Fourthly, a series of political and economic demands of every section of the people will be raised from the very start of the people's war movement and fought for. But it must be clearly understood that they are not a government of a character, the winning of which is to be made a condition precedent for the participation or cooperation in the war. Neither is our "People's War" movement a cover or screen just to develop a mass struggle for winning such partial demands as National Government, democratic rights, release of prisoners, etc. The crux of the matter is that we have to rouse among all sections of the people the consciousness and the will to play their part in the titanic battle that is being waged by the Soviet people and the other peoples of the world against the most brutal form of imperialism, and to inspire them to act and participate in that war fighting at every step with the imperialist government, and its bureaucratic administration, and forcing it to concede such demands and rights as will make that participation really popular and free and, therefore, effective. This is the main general consideration which should govern our general policy.

### **Royism is Subservience to Imperialist Government**

The difference between our policy and that of Roy is as much as between the people and imperialism, revolution and counter-revolution. Roy has always been Zubatov like agent of British imperialism whose job it was to spread disruption in the ranks of labour and left-nationalists by making deceptive use of radical slogans. That he too, to-day raises the slogan of a "People's War" and parades himself as a supporter of the Soviet ought to deceive nobody. One has only to look at his attitude to war and actions when it was yet an imperialist war and to his practice today to see that he is a contemptible lackey of the imperialist bureaucracy. In the imperialist phase of the war, he shouted at first that it was an accidental war and then an "anti-fascist war". In order to confuse

the nationalist ranks and to sabotage the anti-war movement, when he failed in that task, he split away from the Congress to join hands with all sorts of anti-national and anti-labour reactionaries to form the National Democratic Bloc, with the purpose of forming anti-national Ministries. In the present phase of the war, he is mounting slogans of People's War, solidarity with Soviet and with the International proletariat, but in actual practice, he is attempting to split the trade union movement with the help of other government agents like himself. ROY'S "WIN THE WAR" CAMPAIGN IS NOTHING MORE THAN PARTICIPATING TOGETHER WITH HIS HANDFUL OF FOLLOWERS IN THE WAR ORGANISED BY THE GOVERNMENT. HIS AIM IS TO KEEP IT IN BUREAUCRATIC FRAMEWORK. THE AIM OF HIS POLICY IS TO DISRUPT THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT AND TO SEEK TO CONSOLIDATE THE HEGEMONY OF THE IMPERIALIST BUREAUCRACY IN THE WAR AND IN THE WAR EFFORT.

### **Logic of Conditional Support — Policy of National Bourgeois parties**

9. For the colonial bourgeoisie the war of the imperialist masters is always an opportunity for profit-making and extorting concessions from imperialism. This is the key to their understanding of the policies of the various groups in the Congress from Gandhi to the Congress Socialists. In the imperialist phase of the war, the policy of the leadership of the Congress was one of conditional cooperation and a support to war. It was implicit in the September 1939 and it was cashed in rupees, annas and pias in the Poona Resolution (July 1940). The counter-part of this conditional offer to imperialism was a non-cooperation in the legislatures and ministries and a threat of satyagraha. The aim of this policy was to sabotage anti-war struggle of the masses. When imperialists refused to make any concessions, they started the sham individual satyagraha with the purpose of waiting for a suitable opportunity for compromise while continuing the sabotage and disruption of the mass movement. The policies of the Congress Socialists and the Forward Blockists which are only variants of the policy of the bourgeois leadership, were directed to serve the purpose of keeping the radical nationalist elements under the influence of Gandhism. The Congress Socialists did it by playing the rebel opposition in Bengal. Such was bourgeois

nationalism, in the imperialist phase of the war. The policies of these groups in the National Congress in the present phase of the war are again directed towards the same—surrender to imperialism and betrayal of the struggle of the masses. They are louder than ever in the opposition to war and in their words demand for freedom. Gandhiji says, he will oppose all war because it is violence and wants to continue his symbolic satyagraha for repeating the pacifist formula and the boycott of legislatures. Nehru waves a wreath of international slogans and lyrical tributes to Soviet and Chinese heroism and puts them round Gandhiji's neck, only when we got our freedom will we come forward to play our part in the world struggle till then "Long Live Gandhi". Rajaji sees the value of all this as a background against which to pursue negotiations for a surrender. The Congress socialist party now seizes the opportunity "to expose the communists" by saying that the war remains the imperialist war as long as India has not got her freedom. They shout for "mass struggle" but will end by supporting Gandhi. The policy of all these groups amounts to one and the same thing. They turn their back upon the people and look to imperialism for a saviour. When a titanic battle is being waged by all the progressive peoples of the world headed by the USSR against fascism, when the fate of every people hangs upon the outcome of the battle, when people everywhere—not only in the Soviet Union, are acting in this war and changing the correlation of forces in their own favour and against imperialism, at such a time our national leadership does not lead our people along the path of initiative and activity in this war, towards the participation in the world struggle for liberation, but waits in futile passivity and stalemate, hoping that imperialism would give them a hand. The policy which they are following, is born of narrow nationalism and petty class motives which betray not only the world struggle but also the best interests of the people. Such is bourgeois nationalism in the phase of the people's war.

### **Lead For Unity And Action**

10 Our policy in the present phase differs from the policy of the national bourgeois leadership in the same way as our policy in the imperialist phase of the war differed from their corresponding policy in that phase. Then they did not frankly and openly declare

it to be an imperialist war which required an unconditional opposition. They dodged and prevaricated, put up constitutional opposition, made gestures of mass opposition to war, and ultimately settle down with individual satyagraha to wait for compromise at the next favourable opportunity. One thing they did not want was to rely upon the people, to put up real resistance against war. Today they again refuse to rouse the people to the consciousness that they have to win it in common with the other peoples of the world in order to ensure their own freedom. They refuse to rely upon the people to rouse them to such activity and initiative that will smash the obstacles which prevent India from playing her part in the struggle for world liberation and thus paving the way for her own liberation.

## OUR TESTING TIME

Dear Comrades.

We are addressing this letter to you the gravest time in the life of our country. The fascist invader is madly rushing towards our sacred land. The entire political atmosphere is surcharged with political uncertainty, anxiety and expectancy. *WHAT IS THE IMMEDIATE PERSPECTIVE FACING US?*

After the fall of Singapore, our country is in imminent danger of foreign invasion. After the battle of Burma is over (within a month to two months), a fullscale invasion is almost certain.

The Jap fascists however may any day advance to the coastal towns of West Burma, Akyab, etc. and the eastern towns of Bengal. They may attack the Ceylon naval base at Trincomalee as a prelude to the invasion of the South-Madras, Vizag, Cochin etc. Attack on Ceylon can begin any day. The moment the battle of Rangoon is over, the fascists are likely to begin a large-scale offensive of our Eastern provinces Bengal and Assam. Thus the East and South are in the immediate danger zone. Naval and aerial bombardment of towns on the Western Coast, like Bombay, is not ruled out.

Our party had the honour to visualise this situation and call upon the premier national organisation of our people—the National Congress—to acclaim the all-people's war as the war of the nation, to go all-out to unite with the League and hurl our national unity against imperialist autocracy and take the peoples' war in peoples' hands. At Wardha we did not succeed. The national leadership dismissed it as the war of others and waited for Imperialism to make the next move before it will call upon our great nation to act. Valuable months have passed by, our people have felt utterly helpless. The fascist danger has come nearer and nearer. The fate of our nation remains in the hands of the imperialist autocracy, which is visibly sinking before our own eyes.

The threatened invasion of India, however, is no ordinary event.

It has already produced worldwide repercussions. so closely-knit is the fate of all the nations to-day. Our Party, with our effective top and middle leadership locked up in jails, was too weak to move the Congress, unable to get the nation take its fate in its own hands, unable to fulfil its role as the unifier of the people. We failed to get our own people intervene in the peoples' war and make it their own war. Where we failed, the Chinese people and the British people did not fail, so closely knit is the camp of the peoples today. The grave menace to India led the British people to intervene, led to the Cabinet reshuffle, is leading to a reconsideration of the Indian policy of the British Government. It led to the political intervention on the side of the Indian people of the Chinese United National Front, through its leader, Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek's visit to India. At the time of writing, the announcement of the British Cabinet's policy on India is not yet out. But it seems almost certain that some sort of a National Government will come, and a tentative settlement of the Indian problem.

India is no small country, it is a vast sub-continent. We are not helpless, we have a proud national movement. India cannot go down before the Jap fascists without a struggle worthy of our country's great name. India cannot and will not go the Malayan way, it is our job to see that it goes the China way. This is the objective reality, such is our immediate task.

In the meanwhile, let us not forget that our defence has been in imperialist hands. We are completely unprepared, both politically and militarily. It is not unlikely that parts of our beloved motherland in the East and the South may be over-run before the nation is able to rally the people to stem the fascist tide.

Comrades! We are on the eve of a situation when fascist invasion threatens to engulf us, when the peoples' war is not yet in the hands of our people, when our fellow-patriots await helplessly for events but they are rapidly awakening to the reality of the situation, when their own experience is leading them to accept the peoples' war line, when the peoples of China and Britain are acting to put our war in our hands. Very soon the situation will be clearer. Very soon our testing time will be upon us. It will be the testing-time of the Indian Communists more than any other group in India's national life. We will have to prove our worth in daily, hourly



actions We will have to prove the worth of our patriotism by being the FIRST to go all-out to fight the fascists We will have to demonstrate our love for our people by being on duty all 24 hours organising their protection We will have to prove our influence over the masses by being most eloquent and most untiring in rallying them to a man for the holy war against the fascist invaders We will be doing all this in unity with all our fellow patriots The eyes of all will be upon us Not a little will depend upon our deeds

Such a prospect may come upon us sooner than we realise to-day It will be idle day-dreaming to wait for it We have to work from now on to realise it We have to rise equal to the great occasion and bend all our energies to one single task awaken our people to the consciousness of the supreme issues that face us to-day, unite all the forces of the nation to take the peoples' war in peoples' hands and thus prepare ourselves to meet and crush the fascist invader and realise India's liberation

### **Educate Yourself Anew**

Comrades, the party leadership is sending you some very important documents on the peoples' war policy and our tasks — Party Letters and Party Organisers detailing urgent tasks, the final text of the P B Resolution on Peoples' War Policy and the Report of the P B Hansraj's pamphlet, "Forward to Freedom"

They have been written after lots of inner-Party discussion and experience in carrying out the new line They are meant to end the period of discussion and begin the period of action for the new line They are written in a simple straightforward manner Your FIRST task is to study them

You will see at a glance that they are meant not only to clarify and explain the peoples' war policy but materially correct the errors of some previous documents The peoples' war policy is simplicity itself, once you grasp the implications of the transformation of 22nd June, once you understand the full significance of the role of the USSR as the world liberator, once you grasp how the people from being pawns of imperialists, have become the makers of their own fate, in short, once you realise that you are in a completely new period of world history, away from the horrors and helplessness of the imperialist war, and in the midst of the glory and travail of the peoples' war

**You must GET CLEAR ON SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF THE NEW SITUATION**

—Get away from the idea that the peoples' war is an alliance with one section of imperialism to defeat another. Get it clear that the peoples' war is the struggle against world imperialism as a whole. Fascism is not separate from Imperialism. World Imperialism as a whole has reached a stage that it can exist only as Fascism. The only way in which Imperialism can exist in the world of today is as world Fascism and no other. The war of the Fascist Powers is the battle for the fascist enslavement of the world. That will be the fate of the entire world, if Fascism succeeds. But this cannot and will not happen. This is what the mighty Soviet has ensured, this is what the peoples' war means. World Imperialism has been split—Fascist Imperialism has been isolated as the main enemy of mankind. Non-Fascist Imperialism has been caught in an unbreakable pincer grip of the Soviet alliance from the one end and the rising peoples' upsurge from another, and has to face its own liquidation inside the peoples' camp. Peoples' victory in the peoples' war means the end of world imperialism and nothing less.

—Get rid of the idea that it is Soviet's war and therefore, our war and that we support the war because we don't want Soviet crushed. Get it clear that the Soviet is unconquerable. It is the Soviet which transformed the imperialist war into peoples' war. It is the Soviet which stands guarantee against the realisation of imperialist aims in this war and for the realisation of the peoples' aims. It is the Soviet which has opened the prospect of peoples' unity on a worldwide scale, it is Soviet which has given the peoples of the world a war to win and through it their own liberation. The Soviet does it because it is powerful enough to do it with the complete victory of Socialism within its own borders. The Soviet does it because it is a truly peoples' state after the 'Stalinist Constitution. The Soviet does it because it has a workers' and peasants' Red Army. The soviet does it because the Soviet peoples are a NEW people, because the Soviet state is a NEW state, the like of which the world has never known before. It is being acknowledged like the magic of the legends by the imperialists, it is the living truth for the peoples of the world. One-sixth of the Socialist World, under our leading Party, led by our leader Stalin,

has not only transformed the world situation but is acting the leader of the peoples of the world. and what we are witnessing today is the emergence of the living bond that unites the peoples of the world with the Soviet. By transforming the world situation the Soviet has laid the basis for a worldwide peoples' front by its heroic deeds it is paving the way for world liberation its mighty strength is directly behind every struggling people

—Get rid of the idea that the peoples' war means that our struggle for independence is off for the time being and we have to fight the war under whatever conditions exist. Get it clear that the peoples' war itself is our struggle against Imperialism. Get it clear that our struggle against Imperialism reduces itself to-day to one single issue -take the peoples' war in the hands of our people. Get it clear that the actual struggle for our liberation begins with one single act of winning a National Government. Get it clear that the peoples' war is the straight and simple path for India's own liberation and there is no other course before any honest son of our people if he really stands by India's freedom and seriously means to fight for it.

—Get rid of the idea that the peoples' war is the particular property of the proletariat and that it is the job of our Party to demarcate itself from all parties and our lone role to fight the peoples' war. Get it clear that it was the historic role of the Party of the proletariat to be the first to awaken to the consciousness of the change in the character of the war. Get it clear that it is the actual role of our Party to unite the entire nation to take the peoples' war in peoples' hands. Get it clear that it is the job of every Communist and every Party Unit to go all-out to unite with every patriot, all political organisations that desire to resist the fascists that want to defend the country that seek India's freedom.

—Get rid of the idea that the peoples' war policy means the isolation of our Party. Get it clear that the peoples' war heralds a new period for India's united National Front, greater and more glorious than any we have yet witnessed, of which the main base will be the National Congress, which will result in the unity of all patriotic organisations, which will witness the unity of all communities and nationalities in one single endeavour to defend our common Motherland. Faith in our ancient nation demands this of

us. If this does not happen, it is Fascist enslavement for our great people. Look at the growing reality, at real life, our nation is getting into stride for the peoples' war, our patriots beginning to utter our own slogans, a new period of our national unity is emerging right before our eyes. Recall even Sapru's speech at the recent Non-Party Leaders' Conference, he called it the peoples' war, he gave hell to the Maxwells as birds of passage, he called upon the Congress and the League not to sulk in their tents but unite, he, of course, trembled for the fate of India and Britain but he also wanted all that was necessary to take this war from the hands of imperialist autocrats into the hands of the people. Recall that Nehru who was sneering at the peoples' war slogans, building castles in the air about the inevitable collapse of imperialism, propounding theories that there was no danger to India—speaks of our testing time having come, of resisting the aggressor come what may, of India playing her role in unity with China and Soviet. Above all, recall that the great Congress at Wardha declared itself against Fascism and ready to fight the war whenever honourable conditions were created for it. True, the Congress did not adopt a positive policy, true that the Congress did not go all-out to take the war in the hands of the nation, true the Congress did not mobilise and assert India's national unity, of which it itself is the living embodiment, against imperialist autocracy and lead our people into the peoples' war. When has the bourgeois leadership of a colonial movement, not waited as long as it could before it would call upon its own people to act? Initiative to rouse the people, to unite the nation has to come from the camp of the proletariat. Remember, comrades, that China lost its five provinces before the Chinese United National Front got into full stride, before the Kuomintang leadership gave up all hopes of peace with the Jap Fascists. Remember that it was our Party that FIRST gave the call for all-in resistance to Jap Fascists, that went into BATTLE FIRST. In our country to-day, the situation is changing with lightning speed, events themselves bear out our analysis, what we said yesterday our fellow-patriots are saying to-day, all patriotic organisations are finding their way sooner than most of us even dreamt of before, that our liberation lies through this war, that the only way is our unity, in short, to the policy of the peoples' war itself.

It is the job of the Communists to hear their voice and speak to them in their own tongue. It is the job of the Communists to show to them on the basis of their own experience that the path for all is only one—UNITY, that our very patriotism demands fighting the fascists to death, that our hatred of British Imperialism must express itself in taking the war in our own hands, that all that we have to do is to unite and fight, and we will win. It is our job to appeal to patriotism and patriotism alone, it is our job to do all we can to forge national unity, it is our job to propagate the peoples' war as India's war of freedom, it is our job to make our national fighters realise what role the Soviet and China are playing in the peoples' war and what glorious destiny awaits India in unity with them. It is our job to fight helplessness and defeatism and make flaming appeals to patriotism and popularise the glorious prospect opened out by the peoples' war for our great people. This and nothing else is our job, as Communists, as members of the Party of the proletariat, as the true sons and daughters of our ancient nation. No sectarian self-superiority but self-confident comradeship with our fellow-fighters, not phrasemongering but plain and simple language, not endless arguments but untiring practical work is the way to popularise the peoples' war policy.

In these documents, comrades, we have tried to tell you how to do this. Our Central, Provincial and District leaders are not with us but are hostages in the hands of the imperialists. We can no more delegate effective propagandists to you to explain the tasks of the new period that is upon us. Most of you are very young and inexperienced. Remember, the success of the Party policy, the honour of the Party banner depends upon how well you understand the peoples' war policy, how eloquently you popularise it, what respect you command from the proud patriots of our national movement.

—Read these documents as your text-books

—Fix upon the best propagandist in your unit to report on these to you and get all your questions answered by him.

- -Immediately branch yourself out to hold group meetings with militants or Party sympathisers and win them over.

—Go all-out to sell the publications that are meant for sale. It

will be a first-rate political job done if you can sell to every Congress or student worker the new literature that is being issued

—Get a Bolshevik understanding of the new line, clear and complete, try to speak with Stalinist simplicity to non-Party nationalists and you will sweep away all difficulties and get on to practical work.

Some comrades and units are wasting themselves away in long-term speculations, discussing when will this happen and when that, some are becoming military experts on the basis of the daily newspapers and a few maps and forecasting developments! This must go. Appeal to patriotism, pure and unalloyed. Show how there is no other way for our nation except the peoples' war policy. Don't enter into fine arguments about conditional or unconditional support. pose the simple issue, either we take the peoples' war in peoples' hands or face death and destruction under Fascism Show how if we can take the war in our own hands, we march straight to our liberation. Unity is the crying need of the nation. Set an example yourself by doing all that you can by forging peoples' unity, unity of all popular organisations in your own locality. You have the historic example of our Chinese comrades to emulate. You have the heroic deeds of our Soviet brothers before your eyes Let these be your hourly inspiration.

### **Agitational Tasks**

All around you see our patriots feeling utterly helpless, our people in a state of panic. This is the inevitable result of stalemate. The *izzat* of the Sarkar is gone, the national movement is without a direction. The past is dying, the future is not visible, the uncertainty of the present is leading to rumour-mongering and panic is spreading like wildfire. This is the immediate situation but it cannot last. It is our first and foremost task to fight panic. How? Not by sermonising to the people not to be cowards, as the Mahatma is doing. Not by tearing our hair at the "wait and watch" policy of the national leadership and entering into long-winded arguments with our fellow-patriots about the soundness of the peoples' war policy in abstract terms.

**THE WAY TO FIGHT PANIC IS TO POPULARISE THE PEOPLES' WAR POLICY**, not in the abstract but over specific issues. In every meeting,

in every demonstration. *UNITY, UNITY, UNITY* must be the one ringing call that must come from our throats, that will instil self-confidence and allay panic and make all honest fighters listen to us

All must unite to protect the people! Work for joint demonstrations by the Congress and League, supported by students, workers and kisans in which representatives from all organisations declare their united resolve to stand together by the people in this grave emergency, and co-operate together in every measure that will protect the people irrespective of any political differences

All must unite to defend the country! Explain why the imperialists cannot and will not defend us, that the people alone can and will defend our country. Explain how India's patriots can not only defend our motherland but win India for Indians.

In the forefront of our agitation must be the demand for National Government. Explain how it can enable us to defend the country successfully, how it will lead to our liberation, how it will be the expression of our national unity, how it ensures that the nation's war will be in the hands of the nation and secures our future.

Every speech that we make must be a flaming appeal to patriotism, must preach national unity, must show the immediate need to fight for National Government, must show how we can become masters of our fate and cease being imperial slaves by taking this war in our hands

Our immediate agitational efforts must be concentrated on two issues: creating anti-Japanese feeling and winning support for the release of Detenus and political prisoners. This is the way to forge national unity, this is the way to rally the people.

### **Anti-Japanese Day**

In every locality, Communists must take initiative to celebrate Anti-Japanese Day in co-operation with as many organisations as possible, and make it a great United Front day. Do all you can to get the auspices of the Congress and League and get their leaders to speak.

—Explain how Japanese invasion will not be the overthrow of British imperialist rule and India's freedom but lead to the fascist enslavement of our country.

—Explain why imperialism cannot and will not defend the country. All must unite to defend the country. All must unite to fight for National Government. Under a National Government, we can and will hurl back the fascist invader.

—Expose the foul deeds of Jap Fascists. Expose their slogan of “Asia for Asiatics”. Denounce those who look upto Fascism for India's freedom as traitors to the country.

—Glorify China. Explain what the Chinese have done the Indians too can do. Explain how shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese people, we can win not only our liberation but act as the liberators of ancient Asia.

—Explain how it is the war for our homes and hearths, for the honour of our mothers and sisters, for everything we cherish and hold dear. Explain how the nation needs the assertion of all its strength to take the war in its own hands. Explain how under the leadership of the united nation, this war will call forth the first qualities of our great people and enable us to carve our own future

### **Release the Patriots for Freedom's War**

Take immediate initiative to hold similar united front demonstrations for the release of detenus and political prisoners. Congressmen may object to call it the freedom's war, yet drop the word and have only Release the Patriots.

—Demand their *UNCONDITIONAL* release.

—They are among the best of India's patriots.

—They are seasoned anti-fascist fighters.

—The people need them today more than ever before.

—They are hostages in imperialist hands.

—With a united voice demand their immediate release and get them back in peoples' ranks for freedom's battle.

Comrades! Remember that we can win the release of our comrades not by appealing to the present autocratic government which has tortured them, which seeks to humiliate them by imposing anti-national conditions before it will release them, but by carrying on the most widespread and intense agitation for their immediate and unconditional release.

Immediately bend all your energies to build a united front campaign on the basis of Anti-Japanese and Release the Patriots



campaigns. The moment the British Government's policy is announced, new agitational tasks will face us. The Working Committee will meet and shortly after a meeting of the A.I.C.C. will be called. The Party lead on these issues will reach you through the organ and the Party Letters.

### **Slogans of Action**

The place of the Communists is always by the side of the people. Unprecedented and new opportunities to serve the people are upon us. The threatening danger of invasion throws upon us the immediate task of organising the civil defence of the people.

All comrades must clearly grasp certain fundamental issues to be able to function effectively in the new situation :—

—It is not enough to fight panic politically, only through speeches. It is not enough to popularise peoples' war slogans in meetings and demonstrations. Every Communist must set the example in personal courage and be foremost in fighting defeatist propaganda in the area he lives. He must be the first in supporting everything that helps to protect the people. It is no time to wait for "instructions"; hear the voice of the people and know all the patriotic and selfless workers of your area. Together with them do all that you can to serve the people.

—More willingness to serve the people is not enough. The existing training we have is not enough to enable us to serve the people in the war situation. What then we must learn anew? What must we immediately do?

### **All Into A. R. P.**

—All Party members, together with our sympathisers must enrol themselves in to official A. R. P. to get elementary A. R. P. training.

—Only those must be exempted who are whole-time Party functionaries or functionaries in mass organisations and have no time at all to spare. The second category of exemption will be those against whom the Congress may take disciplinary action if they joined the OFFICIAL A. R. P.

The point to realise is that unless most of us have A.R.P. training, we will be able to do nothing in case of air raids except be helpless watchers of the butchery of our people.

A. R. P. training is the most essential task in all coastal towns, especially of the South and East.

An additional responsibility falls upon us because the Congress organisation in these areas is very weak and has hardly done anything about P. V. B. and the A.R. P. is completely official-ridden.

—Get A. R. P. training quick—is our slogan for all Party Members. If in some areas they will not let you go into A. R. P. if you are P. V. B. member, get A. R. P. training first and then go into the P. V. B.

**All Into P. V. B.**

—All Party Members and sympathisers except those who are whole-timers on other fronts must join the Peoples' Volunteer Brigades (P. V. B.) and on no account the Civic Guards (we may send some unknown contacts into it to get information about its functioning. etc.)

—Wherever mass organisations, like T. U.'s, Kisan Sabhas, Student Federations have volunteer organisations, they must be affiliated to the P. V. B. and work in perfect co-operation with it.

—The point is not to start mushroom volunteer organisations nor endlessly discuss what form of volunteer organisation can best protect the peoples, but pool all the resources of all popular organisations together and around the P. V. B. and unite them all. This is what the interests of the people demand and our policy of national unity.

Inside the P. V. B. it must be our endeavour to be called its best volunteers and which ever P.V.B. units are in charge of Party members must be run as model units.

In those areas districts where P.V.B. units have not been started, we must take immediate initiative to rally the Congress workers and form P. V. B. under competent organisers.

In several places not only the Rightist but also Leftist elements will try to keep out our comrades and are likely to play a provocative role. All Party Members must be on guard not to play the game of the provocateurs. We do not go into the P. V. B. to debate over our political policies but to work together with all patriotic elements to organise the protection of our people.

With the formation of the National Government, the whole character of the P V B is almost certain to change. It is likely to merge itself with the Civic Guards and be transformed into some sort of Citizens' Militia. For the time being, we should not be drawn into discussion over its future role but do all we can to improve its present functioning by making concrete and constructive suggestions and by giving the best party guidance to the comrades who are sent into the P V B.

Every P Unit should see to it that a competent comrade is put in charge of P V B fraction and the volunteers' work in the locality concerned. Young comrades will either be too helpless or commit serious mistakes if they are not properly and promptly guided.

### **Org. and Tech.**

Special instructions are being sent to the provinces immediately threatened with foreign invasion. The comrades in those areas will get concrete guidance from their P C's.

In the meanwhile, following instructions apply to all P Units —

—Don't dismantle the U G apparatus before legality has been won. The U G Centres of the Southern and Eastern provinces need being strengthened rather than weakened.

—Check up and strengthen the contact system all round. The higher units must be able to reach the lower units at a moment's notice. Ensure this immediately. Fix up a time-limit within which a new and better contact system gets in functioning order.

—Don't disturb the differentiation between exposed and unexposed members. There is more need than ever before to keep the unexposed members apart from the exposed and not let them get mixed up. Most of the unexposed members can, however, join the A R P and or P V B.

In the Southern and Eastern provinces all Party Units and members must be guided by the realisation that in the areas that come under Jap occupation, all known Communists will be summarily butchered. Cadre is the only capital of the Party. We must save all the Party members we can. What specific instructions apply in such cases?

—All Party Units must destroy all unnecessary records and documents, especially names and addresses of members and P minutes. New and safer dumps must be organised.

—All party Members must stick to their posts upto the very last. Our primary job is not to save ourselves but protect our people and fight the Fascists as long as we can. No P. Member leaves his place on his own, without the permission of his Unit Secretary.

—If and when no resistance to the Fascist invaders is possible it is the particular responsibility of all KNOWN Party Members not to fall into the hands of the fascist brutes. All Party members must make bandobust NOW for a safe shelter, in consultation with their Unit Secretary. The best course for them is to change the area of their residence, change their name and adopt an entirely new identity. They can easily do this by arranging it now with their friends and relatives, and migrating to the neighbouring districts where they are not well known or less known. Their Unit Secretary in consultation with the Secy. of the next higher unit must pass on a report on such comrades to the Unit secy. of the place where such known comrades will migrate. Let it be clearly understood that all such comrades will have to earn their own living. The P would be unable to help them financially even temporarily or take them over as whole timers. They will have to take on some job or the other for their living and be available for part-time work in the service of the Party.

—Every P. Unit in these threatened areas must delegate its most reliable and resourceful comrade to make technical bandobust NOW so that P. contact may be kept under conditions of total illegality and complete breakdown of all communications, with its higher and lower units.

All the above tasks must be finished WITHIN TWO WEEKS. the bandobust rehearsed, and passed by a competent comrade. To postpone the carrying out of these elementary precautions is to be a non-revolutionary, a Satyagrahi instead of a Bolshevik.

### **New Directions**

We will understand the character of the new period more clearly only when the announcement of the British Cabinet is out and the Congress attitude to it is known. On these factors will depend what

immediate political developments take place, when and at what rate we get legality, what emerge as our new tasks.

With the formation of the National Government, the entire nature of our work will change. we will call upon a large part of Party Members to attend special Party Schools and go into the army, we will be able to conduct all our activities legally and get back our leaders. entirely new slogans of mass mobilisation will have to be carried out, our Party will have to work along lines our Chinese comrades have been working.

If the formation of the National Government is delayed and the Jap invasion precedes it, which does not seem likely to-day, it will be the most confusing picture and very widespread panic will ensue during which our Party will have to act with the Congress and all patriotic organisations to serve the people its best.

The immediate tasks of all Party Members and Units have been outlined in this Letter. Be at them for all you are worth: they will earn our Party the respect of all patriots. they will pave the way for the entry of our great nation into the peoples' War Everything is in our favour, you have only to rise equal to the occasion.

With Party greetings.

For THE POLIT-BUREAU

## THE 19TH SESSION OF THE ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS

### Issues Before the Session

Important issues faced the 19th Session of the All India Trade Union Congress when it met at Cawnpore in the second week of February last (1942). The first was the issue of war. The Wardha Session of the A I C C had suspended the individual satyagraha taking note of the change in the situation of the war. The Congress leaders had declared we are prepared to mobilise the people for defence of the country and to line up with the other peoples who were fighting for their liberation against fascist enslavement but for that India must be declared free. Other national political parties in India were saying the same thing with variations. The British public opinion was demanding more and more insistently on their government that India be freed so that its people may defend their country and thus throw back the common enemy. But the imperialist government was not moving. It would rather risk a part of India passing into Japanese hands than free Indians to defend their own motherland against the fascist invader. In the meanwhile, the menace of fascist invasion was coming nearer and nearer.

### The New War Situation

This was the situation which required of the T U C — the premier working-class organisation of India — that it should give a lead to the whole country. What was required was a call to all the political parties to unite on this supreme occasion, and not wait upon Imperialism but to unitedly wrest power from the unwilling hands of the present rulers so that the Indian people may be able to wage a war of liberation against the prospective invaders. What was required of the T U C was an initiative to propose an united

front mass campaign, in co-operation with the National Congress and the Muslim League, for winning National Government, for the release of political prisoners, organising civil defence, for raising production, for democratic rights and demands of the workers and peasants. What was required of the T.U.C. was to take a stand of clear-cut opposition to the Japanese and German fascist aggression and of wholehearted and unqualified support to the war of liberation waged by the U S S R. in China and by the British and American peoples. This was the first and most important issue which faced the T.U.C. Session. The T. U. C.'s reply to this momentous question was, strange as it sounds, that it had no opinion on the issue of war

### **Working-Class Struggle**

The second issue which faced the Session was that of the working-class struggles against lowering of their standard of living due to war conditions, against repression, for the recognition of the Trade Unions. The Session was meeting against the background of the second wave of dearness allowance strikes heroically fought. The second dose of dearness allowances and sliding scales remained far behind the racing living index figures and soaring prices. New ordinances were being promulgated to curtail the worker's freedom of movement and of strike. Working-class leaders and organisers continued to be detained. There were, of course, resolutions on all these points. But none of them contained a decisive lead for action. None of them linked the issue of workers demands with the national emergency which faced the country

### **Organisational Questions**

The third issue was that of organisation. The last session had completed the merger of the old A.I.T.U.C. and the N.F.T.U. The N.F.T.U. was dissolved and all its unions were now directly affiliated to the Central All-India T.U. Organisation. The point was now to take steps to consolidate and strengthen the organisation. These were important organisational issues. The effective functioning of the Central office, making "Trade Union Record"—The Organ of the Central office, a publication which could be a sort of educator and guide to the Trade Union organiser in every Union throughout the country, the proper working of the Provincial Trade Union

Congresses, the checking up of all affiliated unions and weeding out of bogus unions. running schools for Trade Union organisers. raised from the workers in the various centres—were such important and urgent issues. But the Session tackled no organisational issue except the framing of amendments to the T.U.C. Constitution.

### **A Routine Session, Without Lead**

Thus on the whole, the 19th Session of the A.I.T.U.C. has been little more than a routine session. It gave the working class no lead on the burning *Political* question before the entire nation, the issue of war, national defence and national liberation. It gave no decisive lead on the growing *Economic* struggles of the working class. Nor did it take any imported *Organisational* decisions to consolidate and strengthen the unions, the provincial or central organisations.

### **Handicaps and difficulties**

While we criticise the deficiencies of this Session, we must not forget the fact that they were to a considerable extent due to repression which had removed trusted and experienced leaders of the Trade Union movement from the field of work. The axe of repression had fallen more heavily upon the Communists and militants than upon any other group in the Indian Trade Union movement. They represented the driving force of the movement. Their absence not only weakened the central leadership of the movement but to a large extent the routine work of the Trade Unions. The report of the General secretary presented at the session said :

“The Trade Union movement progressively continued to suffer from difficulties and hindrances that have checked its development since the beginning of the war. Repression under the Defence of India Act took many active Trade Unionists from all over the country to jail to this extent that many of the affiliated unions have been obliged to curtail their routine activities.”

The holding of the Session itself was beset with difficulties arising from repression. The Session was to be held in January in Calcutta. But soon after this was a mounced meetings and processions were banned in the Howrah area where the session was to be held. Permission to hold the session could have been obtained but soon



after came the rapid development of the war in the Pacific. The contingency of Calcutta being declared an emergency area arose. It was therefore decided to postpone the session and hold it in Cawnpore in the second week of February.

### **In Red Cawnpore – But ...**

In ordinary times, Red Cawnpore could have been relied upon to make a fine job of a session of that type even at a short notice. But to-day the militant working-class of Cawnpore was handicapped. Its red stalwart leaders who had built the Mazdoor Sabha as a mass organisation. Who had forged Congress-Labour united front in the working—class struggles, were behind the prison bars. Not only leaders like Comrades S. S. Yusuf, R. D. Bharadwaj, Santosh Chandra Kappor, Ewaz Ali etc., were removed but hundreds of militant worker leaders of full committees were put under detention. The most beloved Chacha Jan Mahommed was sentenced to transportation for life just for an anti-war speech in a workers' meeting. Separated from its trusted leaders and its militant cadres, Cawnpore had yet its fighting working class and rallied firmly round its Mazdoor Sabha, with its fraternal ties with the students and the Congress. And Cawnpore did put up a fairly good show for the T. U. C. Session, inspite of the provocative tactics of the local C. S. P. leadership and inspite of the infantile mistakes of some of our own young comrades. The local leadership of the C. S. P. in the Mazdoor Sabha thought it was a god-sent opportunity to discredit the Communists and to drive a wedge between them and the Congress. They thought they could make effective use of the fact that the experienced leaders of the Communists were absent. Further they thought, they could effectively use mendacious propaganda against the Communists new war policy to split them away from the Congress. Had not their leader J. P. sent them that direction from jail? They captured the Reception Committee. They wanted to turn the T. U. C. Session into a sort of an anti-Communist show. In the beginning they seemed to succeed with their provocative tactics. But that was because our young comrades committed sectarian mistakes in putting across our war policy and fell prey to their provocation. These mistakes were later corrected and the disruptors scotched.

### **Who helped the Disruptors?**

The mistakes arose mainly because of a wrong understanding and wrong application of our new policy on war. Our comrades forgot that the crux of our policy was a patient and persistent struggle to Unite the people and the main political parties. The aim of this unity was to achieve a joint mass effort, to smash the main obstacle which prevented the Indian people from fighting the war which was now their own war of national defence against the fascist aggressor, which was their own war of liberation, as a real peoples war. Our comrades thought that all that they had to do was to stage workers' and students' procession shouting the slogans : Soviet's War, People's War, Peoples' War, our War. They did not realise that it was our war because it was our own war of liberation, because it was our own war of national defence. They did not realise that the war had to be won not in alliance with imperialism but on the strength and unity of the Indian people and of their great political parties and in alliance with the Soviet, Chinese and other peoples. The war could be won and the freedom of the country achieved only if it could be fought as a peoples' war after the example of China. But this required peoples' National Government and democratic liberties. These had to be won on the basis of the broadest unity of the people, and of the political parties and by forging mass sanctions to enforce the nation's demands. Such a policy required a campaign of patient explanation among the masses, a persistent effort to organise united front actions on issues on which there was growing agreement, such as release of the political prisoners, aid to the Soviet and China, the condemnation of Japanese and German aggressions and atrocities etc.

### **What Our Comrades Forgot**

Our comrades forgot that they could not defend or aid the Soviet merely shouting "Soviet's war our war." They were required to show that it was the war of India's freedom and to win it we had to unite to take it into our own hands. As Communists, they were required to come forward as the best unifiers of the people, as the best fighters for freedom against imperialism. This was what the new policy required. But this was just what our young Cawnpore comrades forgot. What was the result of this wrong understanding

of the Party policy? This result was that our comrades fell prey to the provocative tactics of the C.S.P. leaders. When they found themselves in a minority in the Reception Committee, they resigned from it. They allowed themselves to be alienated from the Congress masses and from sympathetic elements. However, these errors were corrected on the eve of the session itself, with the help of the All-India T.U. Fraction.

### **C.S.P. Tactics**

The C.S.P. leadership tried to make full use of the fact that they controlled the Reception Committee and the pandal arrangement. They used this advantage for anti-Communist propaganda and slogans. They wanted to use Pandit Nehru to dominate the session and to use him against the Communists. But by that time our All-India T.U. Fraction had taken matters in hand and prevented our cadres from being provoked by the C.S.P. tactics. The result was that we were able to expose the disruptive tactics of the C.S.P. leadership to the other trade union leaders and win their support against it. Comrade N. M. Joshi was very much annoyed at the provocative tactics of the C.S.P. leaders in the Reception Committee.

### **Opening Addresses**

The Trade Union Session was opened by three addresses. There was the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the address of the President of the T.U.C. and then there was the address of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was present there by invitation. The common point in all these three addresses was the "lead" they attempted to give to the Trade Union Congress on the issue of war. All of them united in recommending a "we-can-do-nothing" attitude to the T.U.C. Any other attitude until the imperialist government had changed of its own accord, was dubbed either as co-operation with imperialism or as impracticable.

Pandit Balkrishna Sharma, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the ardent supporter of the Congress-Labour unity in Cawnpore, said that he was a lover of Soviet Russia. "When Germany invaded Russia," he stated, "I was probably the first amongst the political workers of this province to raise my feeble voice from my Britannia Majesty's prison for considering over and over again the Congress policy of carrying on anti-war activities.

And may I tell you that every German victory in the land of the U.S.S.R. was an iron into my ribs. I felt like going whole-heartedly with Britain in this war". But the blindness of the British statesmen, he added, left us no alternative except to stand and wait. The only help we could give to the brave sons of the U.S.S.R. has been given to them. The National Congress has suspended anti-war activities what else can we do ?

V. R. Kalappa, the retiring President, said : Our sympathies are naturally with the suffering masses of Russia. But the Indian working class enslaved as they are, cannot afford to offer any effective aid.

Pandit Nehru's was an aggressive speech. He tried to ridicule the Slogans : "Peoples' War, Anti-Fascist War and Workers of the World Unite." It was all right for China, Russia and Britain who were fighting for their freedom, honour and territorial integrity. It was primarily patriotism which inspired their ardour. India lacked that background. Was she to fight for a continuance of her slavery? She should first have freedom before she could co-operate in the war.

All the three speeches were directed against the Communists and their resolution on war. Their purpose was to distort and run down the policy proposed by the Communists as a policy of co-operating with imperialism, and they are putting forward the policy of continuing stalemate and of waiting upon imperialism as a policy of fighting for freedom.

### **Representation and Grouping At the Session**

Before we turn to the actual business transacted by the Session and to the discussion on the war and the other resolutions we should briefly review the workers' representation actually present at the Session and the relative weight of the different political groups in it. According to the General Secretary's report, the total number of unions affiliated to the A.I.T.U.C. (Dec. 1941) was 182, the total membership being 337, 625. The total membership actually represented at the session according to the report we have got, was 143, 955. We have got no data as to its distribution industrywise. But the distribution of the membership in the various political groupings present in this session can be given. The delegates of the Unions controlled by the C.S.P. the Forward Bloc, the Congress

and the so-called Suresh Banerjee group joined together in a sort of a common front to defeat the resolutions of the Communists. The total membership controlled by this BLOC, according to our information, amounts to 62,561. As against this, membership of unions led by the Communists amounted to 44,119. Membership of unions which had not taken sides amounted to 22,175. Apart from this, the Communists had support from the unions of the Dutt-Mazumdar group (5,500) from a union led by Sudhir Pramanik, a former Royist (2,600) and from the G.I.P. Rly Workers' Union with a membership of 8,000. A union led by the Justicites in Madras also supported the Communists. It had a membership of 3,000. Thus the Communist-led BLOC had a total membership of 63,219 as against the 62,501 of the C.S.P.—F.B.—Congress bloc. Thus on the score of membership itself the Communist led bloc represented about 40% of the total membership represented at the session.

But the proportion of the actual delegates which represented that membership was much less in the case of the Communists. The reason for this was that the Communist membership was made up of large unions (e.g. G.K.U. 20,000 in big industries) while the C.S.P.F.B.—Congress bloc had numerous small unions in small industries. According to the rules for the election of delegates, a union with a membership upto 500 can send 2 delegates, while a union with a membership of 10,000 and 20,000 can have only 18 delegates. From this it is clear that a 20,000 membership made up of numerous small unions can get more delegates than when that same number is made up by only one single large union. Therefore, in terms of actual delegates, the Communist led bloc had a much smaller voting weight in the session than 40%.

### **Tussle On War Resolution**

Before the session, the old General Council met to scrutinise the resolutions. It consisted of 48 members out of which only 3 went Communists. The Communists proposed that a special committee be appointed to scrutinise the war resolution and especially to see if a common agreed resolution can be evolved. This Committee consisted of 2 C.S.P. men, 2 F.B. men, 2 independents and 2 Communists. It is reported that no agreement could be obtained. The C.S.P. and the Forward Bloc maintained that the war was yet imperialist for India and took up the provocative stand of demanding

resistance to it. Later Joshi, Giri and Mrinal Kanti Bose prepared a draft resolution which ran thus :—

“The A.I.T.U.C., while re-affirming the principle of the resolution passed at Bombay, at its last session, held in 1940, takes note of the situation created by the German aggression against the U. S. S. R., the Japanese aggression in the far East and the approach of the war to the gates of India, and is of opinion that to enable the workers of India to take part enthusiastically and effectively in the defence of India, and for that purpose to co-operate with the other nations immediate transference of power to the people of India is absolutely essential”.

The Communists were asked whether they would accept this resolution as a joint resolution and thus avoid all controversy and discussion on the war resolution in the open session. This the Communist refused and rightly. As can be seen from the figures about the relative strength of the various groupings represented in the Session, it was clear that the resolution which the Communists put forward could not get the necessary majority. Three-fourths majority is required for a political resolution to be passed into a binding resolution. This we had not got. All the same it was necessity to put up our resolution, and fight for it in the open session and win for it a considerable support. We had to achieve two objects. We had to make full use of the tribune of the session of the A.I.T.U.C. to explain and popularise our line as the correct lead for the nation, in its entirety. Secondly, we had to see that a position resulted by which we would be free to pursue and propagate our line through our unions.

### **Speeches on War resolution**

The resolution put forward by Mr. N.M. Joshi and others was supported by the C. S. P.—F.B.—Congress bloc. Although some of these groups in their speeches in the General Council maintained that it was still an imperialist war and talked of war-resistance, they did not put forward a resolution to that effect. Their purpose was served by N.M. Joshi's resolution. Their main aim was to prevent the A.I.T.U.C. from giving a positive lead of unity and action vis-a-vis the war in its present phase. Their aim was, if possible, to tie down the Communists to a position by which they would be prevented from propagating for their line even through the unions

they led Communists were therefore perfectly right in insisting that their resolution be discussed in the open session. Thus there were two resolutions on war before the session. Both were put up. Four speakers spoke on each side. Mrinal kanti Bose, Zaman, Ashok Mehta and another spoke on N.M. Joshi's resolution. The Communist resolution was supported by comrades Bamkim Mukherjee, Nanda Bose, Agnihotri and Laljee Pendse.

### **Ashok's Gibes**

The speech which Ashok Mehta made filled even the honest supporters of N. M. Joshi's resolution with disgust. Everyone knows this brave Gandhian-Socialist's way of "Fighting" imperialist war, when it was really an imperialist war. He wanted to be taken to jail post haste for printing a leaflet without print line! And now, when it is a war of world liberation under Soviet leadership, this hero wants the workers and soldiers to desert work! He talked about the Soviet Union fighting a battle of self-defence. Like a fascist agent he talked of "Stalin Saheb's mistaken policy which brought about Hitler's attack." Comrade N.M. Joshi put forward his standpoint frankly. He would have liked to support the war unconditionally now. But he feared the Indian people could do nothing effective unless power was transferred, unless National Government was established. Communists made effective and fighting speeches which were very much appreciated by the working class visitors as well as by the delegates. They said : this is our war of liberation. We have powerful allies in the peoples of the world and a mighty leader in the Soviet Union. We have to move into action, not wait helplessly looking to imperialism. Let the premier working-class organisation give lead to the nation, unite and mobilise the masses so that people can enter into the war and fight it as their own battle of freedom.

### **• The Voting What we Ought to have Done?**

The resolutions were put to vote by show of hands. We mobilised a considerable support. About 35 to 40 per cent. hands were raised in our favour. It was lost. So was the other resolution. We voted against the other resolution. Were the communists right in voting against N.M. Joshi's resolution which we have quoted above ? The result of voting down both the resolution was the absurd position

that the T.U.C. had no lead whatsoever upon the issue of war. True, the resolution put forward by Com. N.M. Joshi and others left the position where it stood before. But it at least took note of the **AGGRESSION** against the Soviet Union and the aggression of Japan. It stated that for enthusiastic and effective co-operation of India with other nations, transference of power to the people of India was necessary. Communists could have got the movers of the resolution to declare that the passing of this resolution would leave the Communists free to pursue and propagate for their policy as did the former Bombay resolution. The movers of the resolution could have agreed to make such a declaration. Comrade Kalappa in his presidential speech had explained that the Bombay resolution of the T.U.C. on war "permitted freedom of action to individual unions, no obstacle was placed in the way of those who desired to carry on pro-war propaganda". Such a declaration could have been demanded again and on that basis, we ought to have agreed to support that resolution after our own was defeated. We could have explained that we are doing it to avoid the absurd position which would arise if both the resolutions are defeated, that on such an important issue as war, the T.U.C. has no pronouncement. Our purpose would have been served and some sort of positive statement on war would have gone before the public on behalf of the T.U.C. In this sense, it was a mistake to vote down N.M. Joshi's resolution in case assurance of freedom of action was forthcoming.

### **Other resolutions**

Besides this main resolution on war, there were three other resolutions connected with workers, demands directly arising from war and war ordinances. A resolution on A. R. P. asked the workers not to be panic-stricken in case of air raids or other war emergencies, but stick to their posts, demand proper protection from the authorities. The resolution called upon the Provincial Trade Union Committees to organise volunteer corps to help the workers in every way. There was nothing controversial in this resolution but the "brave" C.S.P. ers wanted the workers to run away and desert their job! Needless to say, no one paid any attention to these antics and the resolution was passed.

By another resolution, the T.U.C. "Disapproved of the Labour ordinances and legislations which were passed by the Government



under the plea of war emergency, and which curtailed the fundamental rights of the workers.

By still another resolution, it demanded joint advisory committees with worker's representation on them for different industries, to deal with problems arising out of war emergency. Further by another resolution, the T.U.C demanded protective measure for workers and adequate compensation in view of the war risk

### **No Lead On Workers' Struggle**

The report of the General Secretary emphasised the fact that – "a continuous unrest has been evident among industrial labour all over the country mainly due to the fall in the standard of living because of steadily rising prices" The report gives a fairly exhaustive list of the major industries in which successful struggles for dearness allowance took place. It concludes the survey by remarking that the allowances granted are totally inadequate to fully compensate for the rising standard of living. It adds that the situation is being aggravated after Japan's entry into the war and that the struggles for dearness allowance will have to be continued with greater persistence and vigour

Did the T.U.C Session give a fighting lead on this all-embracing issue which affected the entire Indian working class? It did not. The T.U.C resolution on the "Increase in the basic wages and grant of dearness allowance" merely records facts and puts forward demands firstly for a 25% increase of the basic wages in all industries and secondly, for an adequate dearness allowance to be granted to all the workers. There was a resolution which supported the struggle of the Budge Budge Jute strikers for dearness allowance and for 25% bonus. Another resolution demanded the implementing of the recommendations made by the various Labour Inquiry Committee especially like those of the Bombay Textile Labour Inquiry Committee. Another resolution demanded the recognition of Trade Unions and factory committees for joint consultation in the sphere of production and strongly disapproved of victimisation. All these resolutions record facts, puts forward demands and requests before the owners and the government. There were also resolutions demanding the release of detenus and condemning repression on Trade Union activities in Bengal. None of the resolution contained a single lead or direction to the workers.

## **Workers' Conferences in Every Industry**

The most urgent task before the T U C Session was to give a call to the workers to mobilise their forces industrywise in the different industrial centres by organising workers' delegates conferences to put forward their demands. Workers were resisting the attacks against their standard of living and their democratic rights by spontaneous and isolated struggles. The point was to co-ordinate that resistance and fight, to give an organised form and to win for it the support of the people in general. The T U C Session ought to have called for workers' delegates' conferences in every industry and industrial centre. Such conferences would have given a powerful push to trade union organisation in the different industries. They would have served as mobilising campaigns for workers' struggles to enforce their urgent demands about dearness allowance, about increase in basic wages, recognition of unions and committees, release of the leaders, etc. Such workers' conferences in each industry are especially necessary now, in the hour of national emergency. Industrial production must be extended and intensified for meeting the needs of the defence of the nation, for meeting the civil needs of the people. This requires national peoples' Government and democratic liberties. Workers, support these demands. They will be in the forefront fighting for them. Whether before National Government is achieved or after it, there will always be urgent need to secure the effective and whole hearted co-operation of the workers to increase production. This can only be done, by ensuring them democratic rights (release of leaders, no curtailment of right to organise and strike), by recognising their unions and committees, by maintaining their standard of living and improving conditions of work. Thus through such industrial workers conferences, Working class could take initiative for solving production problems of the nation in the present emergency and thus get the nation's backing for its just demands and for right to strengthen its organisation.

## **Slogans for Such Conferences**

Talking into consideration the growing urgent demands of the workers and their worsening conditions in every industry, the organisation of workers' delegates' conferences in every industry and every industrial centre is the correct mobilising slogan of the

hour. Workers' conferences in textile industry and on the railways. in the Jute Industry. in the printing trade. in the engineering industry in mining and metallurgy etc.. are urgently needed. The common slogans for these conferences should be

National Government for national defence and for national industrial effort.

Recognise workers' unions and committees.

Release workers' leaders

Down with ordinances and emergency legislations which restrict workers' right of movement, organisation and strike.

Adequate dearness allowance, 25% increase in the basic wage and war bonus.

Implement recommendations of Labour Inquiry Committees.

Full protection from air raids and compensation for war risk.

Enlist workers' voluntary co-operation in the national industrial effort for granting workers' demands.

A round of such workers' delegates' conferences throughout the country in every industry would lead the wave of a mass upsurge and activity which is due to break forth with the political developments that are in the offing. The T. U. C. by failing to give this lead, on which there was no need for any difference of opinion between the different political groups has missed a great opportunity. The Provincial Trade Union Conferences and the big industrial unions must make good this lapse by taking the initiative themselves for calling and organising such conferences.

### **Organisational Issues**

The organisational issues dealt by the session were nothing more than the routine ones. These were the election of the new General Council and the Working Committee and the adoption of certain formal amendments to the Constitution. The new General Council consists of 66 members, including the co-opted members. There are 13 Communists among these. Comrade Dange, the well-known Communist leader, now in detention at Yerowoda, is co-opted on the Working Committee. Communists who have been elected to the General Council are mainly from the Textile Trade Group and partly from the Railways. This brings out the weakness of the Communists in the other industries. This weakness of the Communists really reflects the weakness of the trade union

organisation as a whole. This can be seen from the distribution of the membership according to trade groups.

The other organisational issue before the session was the amending of the Constitution. All these amendments are minor. There is a change in the rule about the affiliation of unions. A union need only be in existence for one year before it is affiliated. According to the old A I T U C rule, a union had to be in existence for two years before it was affiliated.

As we stated at the outset, the session gave no lead whatsoever to improve and expand the organisation of the T U C, its provincial branches or its unions. The newly-elected General Council met after the session and passed one resolution. It called upon the provincial Trade Union Congresses to organise a Detenu Release Week in co-operation with other organisations.

Such have been the results of the Nineteenth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress. The session as we said at the outset, was a routine session which gave no lead, either political or for struggle or for organisation. The Communists in the session showed that they held their ground inspite of severe repression. They and their supporters together represented 40% of the organised union membership. They were strong in textiles and railways but weak in other industries. At the session, they were unable to make their lead felt.

### **Political Tasks**

What are the main tasks we have to undertake as arising from this session and to generally improve our trade union work? We shall take up these tasks in the same order as we reviewed the session. The war resolution was defeated at the All-India Session. But there is no reason why we should not bring a short, revised resolution before the Provincial Trade Union Congresses and see that a positive pronouncement and lead is given by the Provincial organisations. We should get the Provincial Trade Union Congresses to pass resolutions condemning Japanese aggression, pledging support to China, and organising an anti-Jap aggression campaign, on India-China fraternisation campaign. The point is now, not to raise arguments or debates in the Provincial Trade Union Congresses or in unions where other parties are present, on the issue of the character of war, or of conditional or unconditional support. What we had got to do is to take the initiative in proposing and organising

such positive campaigns on which there can be agreement with the other elements. We must get the Provincial Trade Union Congresses to support the following campaigns :—

1. Release of detenus. in co-operation with Congress, Kisan Sabhas and Student organisation.

2. Friends of the Soviet movement.

3. Support to the P. V. B. and demand for the organisation of a WORKERS' SECTION as a part of it and organised and by the P.T.U.Cs.

4. Anti-Japanese aggression campaign. In industrial centres which have got CHINESE WORKERS, a special India-China workers' committee be organised to run a special fraternisation campaign. This would be a specific way of running an anti-Japanese campaign.

### **Hold Labour Conferences**

In order to bring about a political mobilisation of the working class in each industrial centre behind the main political and economic demands of the working class in the present situation, and especially to bring out the political initiative of the working class, we should hold general Labour Conferences in each industrial centre, with delegates from all local unions. The main resolutions before such conferences should be 1) Resolution on war, demanding National Peoples' Government 2) Condemning Jap aggression and fascism 3) Congratulating the Soviet Union 4) India-China alliance 5) Condemning repression, demanding release of detenus 6) Condemning anti-labour ordinances and legislations 7) Main workers' demands re-wages 8) Recognise unions and committees 9) Production and workers' co-operation 10) Demanding A.R.P. protection and war risks 11) Demanding arming of the people for self-defence. In organising these Labour Conferences, we should take care to make them broad so as to secure for them the support of sympathetic Congressmen who are in the Union. The resolution on war should be formulated accordingly. The point is to make it positive. On other resolutions, there would be no reason for controversy. The success of the conference depends upon OUR work in mobilising the masses and organising it. It depends upon the fighting tone we give to the whole show. Their aim is to bring about a working-class rally, to proclaim labour's determination to

be in the forefront to defend the country, to organise production, to fight for its demands. Without making the conference an arena of fight over policy, we could make it a grand rally for the general support of our policy. Such conferences are not only necessary now before the settlement but more so after it.

### **Industrial Conferences**

The most effective way to co-ordinate the struggles of the workers for their urgent wage demands, such as, for adequate dearness allowance scales, for 25% rise in the basic wage, for bonus as well as for their general demands such as, "implement the recommendation of the labour Inquiry Committees", is to hold workers' delegates' conferences in industries and in industrial centres. We have written about it in the foregoing. Such conferences in the textile industry, on the railways, in the jute industry would not only serve as organised pressure of the workers on the government and the employers but would also enable us to strengthen the organisation. Through such conferences, we would be able to put forward demands and proposals on behalf of the workers in each industry to achieve effective co-operation with labour, to raise production for meeting the national emergency. Such conferences will play a great part in the period after settlement in bringing pressure upon provincial and central governments to settle and solve industrial problems in a manner favourable to labour and with its willing co-operation.

### **Organisational Slogans**

Finally let us once again emphasise the main organisational tasks which face us in the immediate future:

*ACTIVISE THE PROVINCIAL TRADE UNION CONGRESSES* We must take initiative in reorganising and functioning the Provincial T.U.C.s. In the present period, we must run through them as many united front campaigns mentioned above as possible. In short we should organise the general Labour Conferences through it. The "Release the Detenus" campaigns must be pressed forward through it. General labour co-operation with civil defence with A. R. P. and with the P. V. B. in the province should be organised through the P.T.U.Cs.. The last is very urgent. The Provincial T. U. Cs. must take the initiative and see that in every factory and mill, A. R. P. services are effectively organised and workers, co-operate with it voluntarily and enthusiastically.

**TIP-TOP DAY-TODAY TRADE UNION WORK.** Every Union of ours must run a membership drive, see that it is registered, and its registers properly kept. It must be affiliated to the T. U. C through the P. T. U. C. as per rules. We must investigate into the state of all our unions and close down bogus or non-functioning unions for which we have no cadres available to work. Everyone of our union must be a live functioning union.

**ORGANISE THE UNORGANISED** Extend trade unionism to industries and trades not yet organised. Keep watch on new industries developing and send trade union organisers to organise them. Special attention must be paid to the fast-developing engineering industries and shops. Contracts in ammunition and armament works should be made and developed. Unrest is already developing in these factories. Form militant groups in these factories, to organise exposures of conditions inside and to organise actions on the spot. From militant groups to shop committees taking initiative on the spot to organise actions as well as settle and deal with the management—this must be the way in which unionism would develop in the works which are closed to normal trade union activity.

**ORGANISE THE MILITANTS-TRAIN T. U. ORGANISERS.** These are our main slogans for building up solid base for the trade unions and for building up a fighting T. U. cadre. Every Party Cell in localities and in factories must be made responsible for building and running auxiliary militant group round itself according to the directions already given. The best of the militant must be picked up, for being trained as T. U. Organisers.

Such in the main are the tasks which face us in the immediate future in the trade union field.

## ALL-INDIA KISAN COUNCIL REPORTING ON NAGPUR SESSION

In Our PARTY LETTER, Vol. II. No.1. we have already given a short report of the Pakala Session of the A.I.K.C. which was held on 18-19 October, 1941. Since then an official report of that session has been published by the Joint Secretary of the A.I.K.C. on 11-12-1941. The additional facts which emerge from this printed report, published by G. Laxminarayana from Peasants Institute, Nidubholu are as follows.

### Results of the Pakala Session

1. 21 members attended the meeting. Andhra 10, Bengal 5, Punjab 3, Behar 2, Utkal 1.

2. After a brief report by the outgoing General Secretary, accounts were adopted and new office-bearers to A.I.K.C. elected.

3. Among the resolutions, two important ones must be mentioned. The resolution on the national situation reiterated the Palasa Resolution and pledged its support to it. The resolution on the Soviet-German war condemned the treacherous aggression of Hitlerite Germany against the U.S.S.R., expressed its heartfelt sympathy for the valiant Red Army. It recognised that the Soviet Union was fighting for the cause of world freedom and democracy. It stated that the war which Britain was waging against Germany was still an imperialist war. It noted the alliance between Britain and the U.S.S.R. and deplored the fact that Britain was not rendering effective aid, especially by its failure to open a new front in the West. It stated that, "In order to destroy Fascism and render real and effective help to Soviet Russia, complete democratic freedom of the Indian People is most essential." Finally, the resolution called upon "the Freedom loving people of India, particularly, the vast bulk of peasants and workers, and students and youths that they should render all possible help to the U.S.S.R. and work for the



intensification of the war against Nazi Germany on all fronts.” at the same time carrying on an unabated struggle to achieve the following immediate demands Release of political prisoners. End of Ordinance Raj, Formation of a Peoples’ Army. Establishment of democratic republic in India

4 There were other resolutions, such as, on control of price, on Dumraon struggle, and one supporting the dearness allowance struggle of the working class

5 A committee was appointed to submit a report on the constitutional amendments from provinces and individual members This Committee consisted of comrades Jagjit Singh, J R Narayana, Simha Reddy (Convener), Gopal Haldar, Mathura Prasad Sinha and Madhu Charan Mahanty This Committee was to report by the end of January 1942

We have given above a short resume—of the decisions of the Pakala Session as an introduction to the report of the Nagpur Session of the A I K C which was held on the 13th February

### **C.K.C. Meeting At Nagpur**

The Central Council of the A I K S met on 12-13th February 1942 in Nagpur Out of 23 members, 19 attended Those who did not attend were 2 from the Punjab, one from Tamilnadu, one from Behar (Swamijee, who was then yet in jail) The initiative for calling the meeting was taken by Com Indulal Yagnik who was recently released Since his release he was in correspondence with Swami Sahajanand Saraswathi who was then yet in Hazaribagh Jail Through this correspondence, Com Indulal found that both—he and Swamijee were in general agreement with the new line which the Communists were advocating about the changed character of the war after the entry of the Soviet The move for this meeting was taken in consultation with the President and Secretaries of the C K C Its main purpose was to revise the attitude of the A I K C on the present phase of the war and to lay down the policy of the A I K C on the same It was felt that the resolutions of Calcutta and Pakala were no longer adequate nor correct A new lead to the Kisans of India had to be given on the war situation as it was rapidly developing especially after the beginning of Japanese aggression in the Pacific

**Draft Resolution**

Our comrades placed the Draft Resolution on the War. Which has been published in P.L. (Voll. II. No. 1.) before the Meeting. Several groups generally agreed with this draft on principle. But in order to achieve the maximum agreement and unanimity a committee was appointed to produce a draft completely acceptable to all the political groups. The views of the different political groups on our draft may be briefly summarised as follows :

Com. Indulal Yagnik cohile agreeing on principle with our draft, felt that it was not a suitable draft for a mass semi-political organisation. He took upon himself to prepare the draft for the Draft Committee on the basis of our resolution.

The Ranga group in consultation with Prof.. Ranga himself, had come to the conclusion that the Kisan Sabha ought to revise its attitude on war. They felt that the policy as formulated in Palasa and Pakala resolutions needed to be changed. But their objection to our draft was that it was not yet peoples' war for India. They said we could not make pro-war agitation till the Government granted some concessions. However, they voted for the draft as prepared by the committee.

Among the Behar delegates there was a cleavage. Some of the C.K.C. members from Behar owed their allegiance to the Forward Bloc, While others stood by Swamiji who was known to be in agreement with Comrade Indulal Yagnik and the communists. Jamuna Karjee gave up his allegiance to the F.B. Sheelbhadra Yajee stood by the Forward Block position. The third delegate vacillated and finally followed Yajee. The Forward Blocists put up their position in this way. The war in the Mediterranean and in the pacific was being fought by the British and Americans for imperialist aims, and if Fascists were defeated here, Anglo-American Imperialism would become stronger. So their position was : Organise Peoples' Defence Gorps but have nothing to do with the war. Com. Indulal Yagnik Strongly opposed their stand and even the Rangaites did so to a certain extent. The stand of the Forward Blocists amounts to helping the Fascist Aggressors, refusal to unite and mobilise the people to defend the country, refusal to line up with the progressive forces for winning our country's freedom. Being completely isolated Inside the Kisan Council, they masked their real

views. They said that they only wanted one amendment, that was the deletion of the words : "War like peace is indivisible and no artificial distinction could now possibly be drawn between the wars of Russia, China and the allies, who fight together on a world-wide front". This amendment moved by Yajee, however, got no support except from Sjt. Mathura Prasad.

### **The Resolution As Passed**

The Resolution on "War and national Struggle" as finally passed, though it blunts the edges of the clear-cut formulations of the original draft, is yet an advance on previous resolutions. It takes a clear and positive attitude towards the war and calls for the unity of parties and of the people to win the demands essential to make the people's participation in the war really effective and voluntary. It also calls upon the Kisan and Kisan workers to propagate this view on war, to render all possible aid to Russia and China, to co-operate with other parties in organising people's volunteer corps in rural areas. The full text of the resolution is appended herewith.

### **Its Failing**

The resolution does recognise that the entry of the Soviet Union has transformed the war into a war of liberation for all the peoples of the world. It does recognise the fact that the fascist aggressors are the main enemies of all mankind and the defeat and destruction of Fascism require the united efforts of all the freedom-loving peoples of the world. But it does not draw the clear conclusion that it is also India's war of liberation which she has the great opportunity of winning by uniting her people to take the war into their own hands. The resolution, therefore, becomes a sort of a prayer to the Government to grant National Government so that the war can be fought as a people's war after the model of China. It becomes a request to the Congress and the Muslim League to unite and agree "On the formation of a popular government in the country." Therefore, in its operative part, there is no concrete lend to action. It does call upon the kisans to act as men and heroes and stand shoulder to shoulder to defend their hearths and homes, to defend their country. But there is no urgent call to the kisan workers to run a rousing campaign in the rural areas explaining to the Kissans that the war for freedom has begun and condemning Japan and German Fascist aggressors as enemies of India as prospective

invaders and enslavers. In fact, there is no call for anti-Japanese agitation among the kisans. There is no call to organise China and Soviet Aid Days and rallies. There is no call to organise Civil Defence and A.R.P. measures with the Congress and other organisations and in co-operation with the official bodies. There is no call to organise "Release the Patriots for the Nation's War!" campaigns in co-operation with other organisations.

### **Our Immediate Tasks**

In spite of these failings our comrades at the A.I.K.C. meeting were quite right in seeking to achieve the maximum agreement on the basis of a positive policy towards war, on the basis of a policy of unity and action to further the struggle of our liberation as part of world struggle for freedom and against fascist imperialism. By doing this, they succeeded in isolating the defeatists, the hidden supporters of Fascism. The resolution places the whole A.I.K.S. on the proper rails. Our job is to move it forward by action. We have no need to quarrel with the resolution as long as we clearly recognise its drawbacks and implement it in the correct manner.

What then are our urgent and immediate tasks in the rural areas and on the Kisan Front? These have been already outlined in our P.L. (Vol. II, No.1) in the operative part of our draft resolution for the A.I.K.C. meeting. They still hold good. The situation is rapidly changing. The Cripps Mission is being awaited. A settlement at the Centre as well as in the provinces is expected. A new situation of legality, with new opportunities for rallying the masses for the struggle for freedom, for hurling back the prospective invader, is in sight. However, now before the settlement or immediately after it, our immediate tasks are as follows :—

### **Agitational Tasks**

The first and foremost task before the Kisan workers and the Kisan Sabhas is to rouse the Kisan masses to the consciousness of the grave emergency that faces our country, of the great opportunity that stands before our people. The grave emergency is that of the impending foreign invasion. The great opportunity is that of winning the freedom of the country by taking the war into our own hands and winning it against Fascism in common with the Soviet and Chinese peoples and with other freedom-loving peoples. This rousing campaign must take the form of meetings, demonstrations and Kisan Conference.

**MAIN SLOGANS** What are the main slogans which must ring throughout this campaign ?

Death to Jap Fascists. When they invade our land

Death to Fascist enslavers who have devastated so many lands

This is our war of National Defence War of our National Freedom.

Workers' and Peasants' Raj in the Soviet Union is our leader.

Great Chinese People are our allies against a common foe.

The peoples fighting against Fascism are our allies.

Against our imperialist rulers we demand peoples' unity to secure a National Government and democratic liberties.

Release Mazdoor-Kisan leaders and Patriots for our Nation's war.

All-round industrialisation in peoples' interests to avert economic crisis

Arouse the people to defend the country

All in Peoples' Civil Defence

Lessen burden of rents, debts and taxes, control prices, stop profiteering; ensure food supply for all

### **Organise Peoples' Civil defence In the Villages**

Our organisational tasks in the rural areas are first and foremost to organise among the rural population in the villages a self-defence volunteer corps. Wherever the Congress has taken the initiative in organising the Peoples' Volunteer Brigade or a Peoples' Civil Defence organisation. Kisan Sabha and Kisan workers must join it and bring militant kisans into it. To organise propaganda. First-Aid and Rescue Squads in the rural districts of the provinces immediately threatened with invasion is our first task

### **Organise Kisans For Immediate Demands**

A new situation is developing in the rural areas as a result of the growing evacuation of cities and crowding of Kisan population in the villages. In the village, the Kisan is faced with (1) rising prices of cloth, kerosene, salt, tools. (2) after-effects of floods and famine. inability to pay taxes, rents, debts. (3) insufficient food-grain supply, starvation for poor peasant and village labourer. (4) work, employment for the population which has come back from the cities. The main task of the Kisan workers and Kisan Sabhas

is to unite and organise the Kisans and village labourers to fight against these difficulties and not take them fatalistically

### **Urgent Demands In The New Situation.**

Food-grain supply must be ensured for every village: Profiteering and cornering of grain stock stopped: Prices of manufactured goods controlled. Burden of rents, debts, taxes lessened: Village population must get work through the starting of small-scale industries in rural areas; Young and able-bodied kisans must be armed to defend their land –such are the demands on the basis of which a rejuvenated Kisan Sabha movement must be raised. It is necessary to enforce the settlement, to win the National Government, for winning the war for National Freedom. It is necessary to strengthen the hands of the National Government when it comes, against the imperialists who will fight every advance of the peoples' movement and peoples' every demand.

Such are the immediate, general tasks before the Kisan Movement at the present moment.

## CRIPPS PROPOSALS & OUR TASKS

We are printing below a statement drafted by the Polit-Bureau immediately after the publication of the draft proposals of the British War Cabinet. It lays down generally our approach to the proposals. Since then the press representing the various parties has put a barrage of opposition to these proposals. At the time of writing, the resolutions of the Congress Working Committee or of the Muslim League is not to hand. But it is expected that both these bodies would criticise the proposals, suggest alternatives and keep the door open for negotiations, which may go on for a week or so more.

### The Test

What should be our attitude and our slogans in view of this not altogether unexpected development? The line indicated in this draft statement is generally sound and continues to hold good. Our lead to the country and to the great political parties, especially to the Congress and the Muslim League is "United on the basis of common tasks, common agreements to achieve a settlement on the basis of the Cripps proposals, using your united strength to get such adjustment on the issue of defence as would really and freely enable us to mobilise and arm our people for a total national defence."

### Not a Charter of Freedom

The proposals fall into two parts. The part dealing with the future Indian constitution is certainly not our Charter of freedom. It does not give complete independence, nor does it give us Constituent Assembly. It gives no freedom to the States' people, nor does it satisfactorily solve the communal question. But do we expect our freedom's charter to be drafted in London by a British War Cabinet which is yet dominated by imperialists? Obviously not. Who does not know that this neatly balanced scheme, though it talks of sovereignty, constituent assembly, right of secession etc., leaves

loopholes for the reactionary forces in the country to assert themselves so that through their help British finance capital may yet remain supreme? The point is not to examine these proposals with a magnifying glass of constitutional law. The point is not to examine whether they concede us full independence or not. Such an examination is very soon made and the result would be that they are not even "a post-dated cheque" for independence.

### **But A Lever To Win It**

What we have to ask ourselves is this : do these proposals reflect a changed relation between the people and imperialism ? And the answer is : yes, they do. They are not a resuscitation of the hated August offer. That position is dead and gone. Imperialists have been forced to move a step or two forward. Not because there is a change of heart, but because there is a change of situation, but because they have to recede today before the growing power of the people. It is not 'anxiety' of the British and the Indian peoples, but their pressure, their growing determination to release people's power to defeat the fascist enemy of humanity that has forced the imperialists to step back a little. The British rulers say to us : We are pledged and determined to give you a self-governing status, with a sovereignty in no way inferior to ours. We are pledged and determined to set going a democratic process of constitution-making immediately after the cessation of hostilities. We say, very good. Your pledge is a good basis for a settlement to meet the immediate emergency. Why do we say that ? Have we suddenly developed a faith in the pledges of the imperialist rulers ? Nothing of the sort. We say so because we know that behind the pledge of the British Government stands the growing power of the British people. We say so because we see the pledge against the background of the world war of people's liberation. We know very well that the freedom of the country will not be shaped by the neatly - balanced schemes of the British War Cabinet but by our own actions in this mighty people's struggle, but the actions of our great allies—the Soviet and Chinese peoples, the British and American peoples. The freedom of India as a whole from imperialist rule, the freedom from oppression for all the nationalities and communities that inhabit India, the guarantee of their full, free and unhampered development, the freedom and democracy to the peoples of the States—all these



can and have to be won through our own united struggle. It can neither be made or unmade by any preconceived schemes made by others.

### **Test of Practical Proposals**

The real test to be applied to these proposals is not whether it concedes independence or whether it solves the communal or States peoples' problem. The real test is : does it give us enough freedom here and now to mobilise and arm the people for the country's defence, and to reorganise the economy of the land so as to feed and protect the people and to supply the needs of war ? The actual practical proposals about the establishment of the National Government are not yet clearly known to the public. But what is generally proposed is a completely Indianised Council with Congress - League majority, capable of functioning as a responsible body. the Viceroy not interfering as long as the Council is agreed on their decision. The main hurdle is the control and responsibility over defence. Sir Stafford has categorically stated that the British Government are not prepared to hand over the responsibility of the defence to the Indian National Government. The Commander-in-Chief would remain a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Obviously, this position is untenable. If there is a real National Cabinet you cannot take away defence from its collective authority. There cannot be any valid reason for defence being made an exception.

### **Solve "Defence Hurdle" By Congress—League Unity**

What should be our attitude towards the proposals as they are known now ? What slogans do we popularise in our agitation now in this week when the settlement is on the anvil ? In our meetings and demonstrations, in our public utterances we should state that these proposals, inadequate though they are, are yet a suitable basis for negotiations for a settlement. These proposals represent a retreat of imperialism and an advance of the peoples' forces. But to use them, to transform them into an effective lever capable of solving the tasks which face our nation today—this is the urgent need. By themselves, as they stand, they do not envisage a really national government, with full competence over every sphere of administration and of the conduct of war. Defence is being sought to be taken away

from its control. Therefore we say : Let the Congress and the League UNITEDLY press for this demand. Let them come together on the basis of a platform of action declaring their common determination to head jointly a really national government, to defend the country, to protect the people, to win India's liberation in common with the freedom-loving peoples of the world. What is urgently needed in this critical hour is a Congress-League agreement, not one merely to share out seats in the Viceroy's Council, but a broad-based, generous political agreement which will restore full mutual confidence between the masses of the Hindus and Muslims, which will enable their joint struggle against the aggressor and the joint march towards freedom.

### **Basis For Congress-League Agreement**

What should be basis of such an agreement ? Nothing but the very urgent and immediate tasks that face our people in this grave emergency. These tasks are :

1. Defend India against the aggressor, line up with the progressive peoples fighting to destroy fascism and to create a world in which every people is ensured independence and democratic liberties;

2. Jointly strive for, and man, a National Government having full competence over all spheres of administration, including defence;

3. Intensify India's industrial and agricultural production to meet the needs of war and to feed and give work to the peoples :

4. Arm the people;

5. *PRESERVE AND EXTEND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES*, enabling a total people's mobilisation and unity to strengthen the National Government in its tasks and to smash any efforts at its sabotage from whatever quarter they may come:

6. *CEMENT COMMUNAL UNITY*, by declaring that the issues of Akhand Hindustan and Pakistan would not be prejudged now, but the Congress should pledge itself to a declaration that in the free and united India of its conception, there would be complete autonomous states, each of which will be comprised of a mass nationality having a common language, history, tradition, common territory, psychological make-up and economic life. Each such autonomous state will have the right of secession from united India, which would be a voluntary union of free and equal autonomous democratic states. The Congress should further pledge that

interspersed small minorities who cannot be given territory will have their rights re language, culture, education, etc completely guaranteed. All special rights and privileges of communities and nationalities would be abolished, ensuring that there is no oppression of one community or nationality by another. *SUCH A DECLARATION IS ESSENTIAL AT THIS STAGE TO BE THE BASIS OF A CONGRESS LEAGUE AGREEMENT*. Only on the basis of such an agreement would it be possible for the Indian people to counteract and nullify the implications which are implicit in the scheme of the British draft declaration and to forge real unity and amity between communities for the struggle for a free India.

A Congress-League unity on the basis of the above points will not only enable us to achieve a favourable settlement which is urgently needed now, to enable us to rouse the people and to defend the country but it will also lead the people in their irresistible march towards freedom.

### **Our Slogans**

Our slogans, therefore, are

*CONGRESS LEAGUE AGREEMENT* to effect a settlement on the basis of Cripps proposals and to win National Government

*WE DEMAND CONGRESS-LEAGUE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT* at the Centre, with competence over every sphere of administration, including defence.

*WE WANT A FIRM BASIS FOR COMMUNAL UNITY*. Put aside the question of Akhand Hindustan and Pakistan for the present.

Resolve that there will be No oppression of one community by another in Free India.

We appeal to all the great parties to unite in common patriotic endeavour to defend our Motherland and its people. Such unity will ensure a settlement here and now which is today the urgent need both for the Indian as well as the British people.

*Therefore, hold meetings and demonstrations demanding these things. Pass resolutions on these lines and send them to the press*

## THEY MUST MEET AGAIN

P. C. Joshi

### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*[This pamphlet consists of a reprint of two important articles written by P. C. Joshi. The first one sums up the results of the Gandhi-Jinnah meeting, the advances registered, the difficulties that caused the breakdown and the way forward. The second, written before the meeting took place, outlined the issues that faced the two leaders, the hurdles that would have to be crossed if a settlement was to be reached.]*

The enemies of Indian freedom are jubilant, all freedom-loving Indians are heart-broken over the failure of Gandhi-Jinnah negotiations. To say that the whole people are in mourning is perhaps the simplest way to describe the feeling in the country. The shock after the failure is as great as was the expectation when the news of their meeting was first announced.

The sorrow is commonly shared but each set of mourners has begun to blame the other for the burial of the common hope of a united national front against deadlock and for freedom.

### For Unity Without Prejudices

The dominant opinion among the *LEAGUERS* is that the negotiations failed because the Mahatma was not prepared to accept their just demand for Pakistan, that he remains a prejudiced Hindu yet.

The dominant opinion among the *CONGRESSMEN* is that the negotiations failed because Jinnah was not prepared to put his demand for Pakistan to the test of people's will, he puts his sectional demand above Indian freedom, is afraid of coming into a joint front with the Congress.

We Communists share neither the Congressmen's prejudices against the League nor the Leaguers against the Congress. When we put to them each other's viewpoint on the failure of the negotiations we hear in return a long indignant lecture how the other side is utterly unjust.

When fellow-fighters for freedom, inside two brother organisations, which are the two major political organisations of the country, react to the same single issue in two radically different ways, there are obviously plenty of prejudices and a lot of ignorance about each other's point of view. They are, in other words, unable to explain themselves to each other in terms of common experience and common ideals.

Our Party is the only organisation that has actually worked for Congress-League unity. We alone have tried to explain the viewpoint of one to the other during the last two and a half years. We have popularised the Muslim demand for Pakistan among Congressmen and the Congress demand for National Government and the need for the release of Congress leaders among the Leaguers.

### **Undaunted In Face of Slander**

Anti-unity, pro-sabotage and pro-Hindu elements among congressmen have tried to stop us getting a hearing by spreading the slander that we were Government agents and in private paying the compliment (not meant to be such) that we were able to work out the case for Pakistan better than even the Leaguers.

Reactionary elements inside the League have frowned upon our efforts to popularise the demand for National Government and the release of the Congress leaders; they warned their following to be on guard against us as the Fifth Column of the Congress.

Undaunted we went ahead with crusading ardour winning, with difficult but steadily, more and more support for the cause of unity till bitter experience at the hands of an alien government and the course of national life itself swung the leaders of the Congress and the League into each other's arms. We rejoiced with the rest of our people at the prospect of national unity.

But we did not share the naive hope of the vast mass of Congressmen and the Leaguers that the two leaders would somehow pull off a

settlement and all that we had to do was to await marching orders. In my article, *"They Must Not Fail"* (*People's War, Vol. III, No 8*) I had pointed out the big hurdles the two leaders had to successfully negotiate if there was to be a settlement which we all desired. The negotiations broke down, as their correspondence now reveals, over the issues I had forecast.

We have therefore a right to be considered really non-partisan in the controversy and expect to be listened to with greater attention by both than the attention they would pay to each other.

We have also earned the right to make constructive proposals because we have fought for unity and campaigned for the viewpoint of each in the camp of the other.

The leaders tried their hardest and failed. The following of each sees nothing wrong with the stand of its own leader. Both the leaders have expressed the hope to meet again. But this hope will not materialise unless the entire body of patriots in both camps do their thinking all over again. The differences that held the two great leaders back are the very differences prevalent in the minds of their following over the issues discussed.

### **Failure of Leaders is Failure of All**

The gap between Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb is the gap between the Congress and the League, between two different concepts of freedom. The leaders set out to convert each other to his own concept of Indian freedom and the way to achieve it. Both failed.

The two standpoints are summed up and crystallised in the two key documents which formed alternatively the basis of the discussions, the famous Lahore Resolution of the League and the equally famous Rajaji formula, which Gandhiji, while retaining all its essentials, recast during the last stage of the negotiations.

They differed because they stuck to their won specific ideals; each felt self-confident because he had succeeded in building up one of the two premier political organisations in the country: each felt fired with the sense of justice in his own cause, because he had succeeded in building up a mighty mass movement behind his organisation, the Swaraj movement in the case of one and the Pakistan movement in the case of the other.

If it were true the ideal of one was just, while that of the other unjust then the existence of the other organisation in all its majestic strength could not be explained. If one side had the monopoly of freedom, democracy and justice and the other was only a medley of backward prejudices, dark ignorance and *zubherdust* demagoguery, then the living evidence had to be denied that millions of our people considered the Swaraj and the Pakistan movements as their freedom movements.

There are real differences they have to be studied in all seriousness to re-examine our own deeply held views and in all humility to understand the other viewpoint because it expresses in another way the same freedom urge for which we claim to stand.

### **Not Partisanship but Understanding**

The specific standpoints of the Congress and the League have been most ably stated by Gandhiji and Jinnah Sahab. The main task now is to see why a common standpoint could not be evolved. It is clear enough that if common principles cannot be successfully evolved a common front for freedom cannot be built up. The leaders failed because they set out to convert each other while the task was to understand each other.

Let us see how they understood each other, what they saw and what they failed to see. Gandhiji had to give and Jinnah Sahab had to take. Gandhiji was not prepared to go beyond the Rajaji formula and Jinnah Sahab was not prepared to compromise on the Lahore Resolution. Both the leaders knew the terrible consequences of failure. From where did they get the strength to stick each to his own demand to refuse the other?

*There is something essentially sound in the standpoint of each and yet there is something that is wrong too. Unless we study the correspondence with this frame of mind the result will be to go in for partisan phrasemongering and dividing ourselves up into two armed camps. We have got to come together and the process involves serious mental effort to understand the other's viewpoint without any preconceived prejudices.*

### **Spirit and Substance of Lahore Resolution**

What is the substance and spirit of the Lahore resolution to which Jinnah Sahab stuck and from which he refused to budge?

Anyone reading it dispassionately will see for himself that it is as much an Independence resolution as the 1929 Lahore resolution of the National Congress itself. "Independent States" in any part of India, it goes without saying, cannot be established under British suzerainty, but have to be won against it.

- It is a resolution of Muslim independence and is as just as freedom itself.

- It is a resolution of independence against the present enslavement by the British imperialists.

- It is a resolution of independence against future domination by the Hindu majority.

That is why it demands autonomous and sovereign states in the North-Western and North-Eastern zones where Muslims are in a majority. That is why Mr. Jinnah does not want the Muslim homelands to be part on any All-India Central Government, which is likely to rest on the Hindu majority in India as a whole.

Mr. Jinnah wanted the acceptance of the Lahore Resolution itself to be the basis of settlement between the Congress and the League. What is the platform of unity that Mr. Jinnah offered, as it emerges from his letters to Gandhiji?

- (1) Accept the right of complete independence of Muslim India, viz., the right to form an independent sovereign state.

- (2) Recognition of the above right to form the basis of a joint front between the Congress and the League for winning freedom both for Pakistan and Hindustan through their joint efforts.

- (3) Boundaries between the two States to be settled by mutual agreement.

- (4) Two separate constitution-making bodies to draft the constitutions of the two States.

- (5) Future relations between the two States to be defined by treaties between them as between two independent States.

A little thought will disclose that Jinnah Saheb has done nothing more and nothing less than work out all the logical implications of complete independence for the Muslims. On the basis of the inalienable right to freedom, he demands the right to establish an independent sovereign state, within clearly defined boundaries, to be set up through a separate constitution-making body, and to enter into treaty relationships like an independent and equal state



—ceasing to remain a subordinate province—with the rest of India

But Gandhiji found himself unable to accept the principle of independence of Muslim India. Patiently for hours together he heard Mr Jinnah, who passionately pleaded that the Muslims are a separate nation—it was Mr Jinnah's sole argument, the way he explained it made no sense to Gandhiji—worse still it made him afraid for the future of free India.

### **Platform of the C. R. — Gandhiji Formula**

Disagreeing with Mr Jinnah that the Muslims are a nation Gandhiji naturally could not be won over to regard independence as the birthright of the Muslims as a nation. To Gandhiji, freedom is our birthright as Indians, and not as Hindus and Muslims.

Gandhiji failed to see the demand for Pakistan as a freedom demand which he must support, he saw it rather as separatist demand in which he could, at best, acquiesce.

Gandhiji, however got clearly convinced of Mr Jinnah's utter sincerity—he had seen the League grow by leaps and bounds on the basis of the demand of Pakistan itself. His generous heart impelled him to find a solution which would meet the League demand. His great practical experience as the Nation's Father helped him to grope towards the great idea of India as a family, whose Muslim member could separate, if he so desired, and that he could not be kept inside by force in a free India.

Thus though Gandhiji could not see his way to accept the Muslim right to sovereign independence, he was prepared to concede the right of separation. He thought that in this way he would be conceding the substance of the League demand. The Rajaji formula and his own gave shape and form to his ideas on the subject. They are

(1) Joint Front between the Congress and the League to win freedom for all

(2) Separation of mutually agreed demarcated zones after the achievement of complete independence

(3) Before exercising the above right of separation, a plebiscite of the entire adult population on the issue of separation

(4) Guarantee in the treaty of separation for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal

communications, customs, commerce and the like as matters of common interest.

### **Root of Differences**

The two greatest leaders of our people met with a will to achieve a United Front. They took 18 days but talked as they themselves say, 'round and round' and on 'parallel lines.' Each stuck to his own conception of Indian freedom and therefore failed to come together to fight for that very freedom itself. Both were moved by the same freedom urge and yet failed to evolve common principles of freedom that would unite the entire people. The crux of their mutual differences lies in the unfortunate but blunt truth that one does not see freedom behind the standpoint of the other.

To Gandhiji, Pakistan is not Muslim freedom, but the ruination and disruption of the country.

To Jinnah Saheb, the Congress movement is not to win the freedom of all, but almost certain to result in the establishment of Hindu domination after the British Raj is gone.

Gandhiji holds the Muslim fear of domination by the Hindus to be groundless and extravagant and their demand for sovereign independence unjust. He also suspects in it the desire to grab other people's lands where non-Muslims are in a majority. Pakistan is anathema to him, but he agrees to accept the right of self-determination as a lesser evil, as a necessity to win over the Muslims for a United Front for freedom's battle.

### **New Proposals**

Unable to accept Pakistan as a just demand, Gandhiji evolved the conditions he gave in his last offer, so as to safeguard against the 'evil consequences' of Pakistan and also to be able to take his following even as far as he was prepared to go. For example :

(1) Joint Front for the independence of both Hindus and Muslims. Immediate unity for freedom in return for future exercise of the right of partition.

(2) The exercise of the right of partition to be put to the test of the people's will through a plebiscite. A vast mass of Congressmen doubt if the majority of the Muslims really want partition.

(3) To ensure that just boundaries emerge out of the plebiscite of the entire people. Thus if the Muslim majority has its way, the minorities too will have their say.

(4) Previous agreement that matters of common interest will be administered by mutual agreement. If the brother is so unreasonable as to demand partition, obtain a previous guarantee that he will not run riot.

### **Lack of Explanation**

Gandhiji genuinely believes that by his formula he has conceded the substance of the League demand and by the conditions which he has laid down he has given it shape and form to make it practically realisable. When Mr. Jinnah argues that he has not really accepted the very essence of the Muslim demand as given in the Lahore resolution, Gandhiji argues back that he has improved upon it and made it politically acceptable to the non-Leaguers as well !

Mr. Jinnah is acutely suspicious of Gandhiji's conditions. Just as Gandhiji has no doubt in his mind that he is offering Mr. Jinnah the substance of the League demand, so has Mr. Jinnah also no doubt left that in their totality, Gandhiji's conditions constitute an actual negation of his basic demand. He understands every single condition to mean the exact opposite of what Gandhiji means. He regards plebiscite as the trap to cheat him of Pakistan. He considers the demand for prior agreement to administer matters of common interest by mutual agreement as a back-hand effort to get back to some form of a Hindu-dominated All-India Centre.

The one silver lining in Mr. Jinnah's stand is that he too sees the need for joint front and stands for future treaty relationship to live in peace and amity, but he makes acceptance dependent on the unequivocal recognition of sovereign independence of Muslim India *now*.

Mr. Jinnah wants the Pakistan State to be independent and sovereign, self-sufficient and strong, but he wants to achieve it by mere bargaining, without reference to the people's will. That is why he could not win over Gandhiji and liquidate his prejudices against Pakistan.

Mr. Jinnah is rightly impatient of Gandhiji not accepting Pakistan as the birthright of the Muslims.

But how can this birthright be accepted by brother peoples unless the great leader of the Muslims stops arguing like a lawyer and speaks like a people's tribune and can explain how the Pakistan State will be formed and how it will be run; unless he can explain

that the Pakistan State will be a democratic state and will conform to the same standards that the rest of the Indian people will apply to their own state; that it will operate as a *just* state by the same standards that all other patriots will demand from their own State

### **Their Blind Spot**

What Gandhiji does not see at all is this :

(1) that it is the freedom urge of the Muslims that expressed itself in the Pakistan demand .

(2) that the mass movement led and organised by the League is the national movement of the Muslims for unfettered freedom in their own homelands :

(3) that it is not so much a question of what Mr. Jinnah says or does not say, but the real problem is one of winning over one-fourth of our peoples for a joint freedom struggle.

In short, Gandhiji is unable to see the Pakistan movement as an anti-Imperialist freedom movement. From the published correspondence, it appears that Mr. Jinnah did not care to explain this. Gandhiji is primarily interested in the freedom of India and the only way to make him and Congressmen consider the Pakistan demand dispassionately is to convince them that *the Pakistan movement is the freedom movement of the Muslims and it can become part of the common anti-Imperialist movement the moment they accept the Pakistan demand.*

What Mr. Jinnah, on his part, does not see is this

(1) that Pakistan will never be willingly conceded by the British Imperialists, but has to be won through a joint struggle for Indian freedom as a whole ;

(2) that the Congress movement is not a movement for Hindu domination, but for Indian freedom ;

(3) that the natural allies of Pakistan are his brother Hindus and that there is no hope for Pakistan unless he can win over his brothers, their organisation and their leader.

In his correspondence Mr. Jinnah has called Hindu-Muslim unity a pre-condition to winning Indian freedom. *But this understanding is purely formal.* On the basis of the Pakistan demand he has raised a mass national movement of the Muslims and yet he has not succeeded in winning the support for the Pakistan demand of the first political organisation of the country nor of its

leader nor of the mass of its workers. It has never struck him that there is likely to be something vital missing in his explanation of Pakistan when it does not get the spontaneous and enthusiastic support of his brother peoples.

### **Key Question**

Before we can come to a common understanding of the problem defying solution let us turn to the vexed question *Are the Muslims a nation or is India a nation?*

Both the leaders violently differed on this and reached a deadlock. They set aside the battle of principles to reach a practical solution and naturally failed. *A common front cannot be established without a common understanding backed by common principle.*

To Gandhiji the very concept that the Muslims are a nation is abhorrent. His reference to Muslims as a body of converts has called forth a screech throughout the Muslim Press.

Mr Jinnah can only state his case for Pakistan on the basis that the Muslims are a nation. His lawyer-like arguments run thus: the Muslims are a nation, a nation has the inalienable right to be free, Pakistan is the freedom demand of the Muslim nation, accept Pakistan and have a joint front for Indian freedom.

Gandhiji has the greatest objection to accepting religion as basis of nationhood. He is right in the sense that religion alone does not make a nation. It will be a digression here to discuss what part religion does play in influencing the psychological make-up of a people and in moulding their national culture both of which are among the attributes of a nation. It is enough for us to state that the Indian Muslims cannot be regarded as a nation on the basis of their common religion. But to say this alone is to state only half the truth.

### **Muslim Nationalities**

The problem cannot be whisked away by the "either-or" trick, more precisely, that either the Muslims are a nation or they are not!

Right in our own midst live Muslim peoples like the Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans, Western Punjabis, Eastern Bengalis and they have the necessary characteristics of nations.

(1) They share the common aspiration to be free and autonomous in their own homelands and to stick together in a common State.

(2) They have the common bond of their own folk culture, strengthened by the traditional Muslim culture.

(3) They have contiguous territory in the N. W. and N. E. zones of India except for the Eastern Bengalis who share a common homeland with their Hindu brothers.

The Pakistan movement, under the banner of the League is the national movement of these nationalities. Why should it be at all difficult for Gandhiji and Congressmen to see the anti-imperialist content of their movement and hail them as fellow-fighters for freedom?

- Once in 1920 Gandhiji united The Khilafat movement of the Indian Muslims with the national movement of the Congress. When in 1920 Gandhiji, sympathised with the demand of the Indian Muslims for justice to their brother Turks, in 1944 with what heart can he deny the right of his own Muslim brothers to be free and sovereign in their own homelands?

- In 1920 Gandhiji brought the Muslims inside the common national movement by making his own the Indian Muslim sympathy with rising Turkish nationalism that was sought to be suppressed by the British Imperialist statesmen.

Despite the fact that a whole new section of the Muslims liked the Pathans of the North-West Frontier lined up behind the congress in 1930, ever since 1920 the Muslims have been slowly going away from the Congress—this is true on an all-India scale and of the Muslims as a whole.

This unfortunate development took place because the Congress as a whole was too slow to redress the Muslim grievances and not responsive enough to the Muslim demands.

After a period of chaos and confusion the Muslims began gathering their forces and ever since 1935 they have been grouping themselves around the League and building their own national movement for the freedom of their own peoples *About half the leaders of the League are ex-Khilafatists and ex-Congressmen.*

It is a cheap kind of satisfaction to say that Mr. Jinnah has not proved his case. It is bad patriotism not to recognise the freedom-urge wherever it exists, in any form in which it may be welling up, and above all among our own brother peoples.

### **India — A Nation ?**

To Gandhiji that India is a nation which is being born to greater

nationhood through the fire of freedom struggle, appears to be self-evident truth.

In Mr. Jinnah's mind the picture of an Indian nation does not recall the stories of epic heroism and countless sacrifices in the battle of freedom as it does in Gandhiji's because he has kept away from the Congress since the great days of 1920. On the other hand, the idea conjures up in his mind the 19th century theory of one nation, of one state, and so all his fears of the suppression of the Muslims by the Hindu majority in a free India are violently roused.

Do then the two concepts that the Muslims are a nation and India is a nation cancel each other out?

The solution lies in working our way up from Gandhiji's own new conception of India as a family; which he formulated when he was faced with the major responsibility to achieve national unity through his talk, with Mr. Jinnah.

He made it clear that his concept that India is a nation does not deny our own internal differences, but that it only expresses our unity against British domination and in the struggle for freedom.

### **Family of Nations**

Gandhiji has come so far that he recognises that India is a family of units. The reality, however, is that India is not a family of *undefined units*, but a family of nationalities.

- We have a common national movement symbolised in the Congress. We have a rising Muslim national movement symbolised in the League. Both are directed against the British imperialist domination of our common country, both embody the urge of our peoples to be free.

- We have a common destiny. We will need to defend in common our hard won common freedom. We will need to work together for the economic and social reconstruction of our common motherland.

All national units of the great Indian family ardently desire unfettered opportunities for their own self-expression and self-development. Predominantly Hindu nationalities like the Tamilians, Andhras, Malayalis, Mahrattas, Gujeratis etc., would like to stick together and be satisfied with the assurance of complete autonomy and perfect equality under a common Indian Union.

Similarly, the Muslim nationalities living in the North-West and

North-East borders of India want to stick together and have a separate state of their own.

### **Pakistan—Why and How ?**

*Their right to be independent and sovereign in their own homelands must be recognised as their inalienable right to freedom. To deny this is to cease to be freedom-loving and lay ourselves open to the charge of wanting to be future lords and oppressors of our brother peoples.*

But how is this right and claim of the Muslims to be realised in practice? Only if the national movement of the Muslims can enter into an alliance with the broad national movement . by establishing a United Front of the League and the Congress, the fight against the common domination of British Imperialism and so win freedom for all.

Congress-League United Front is equally necessary to realise the basic aims of both the organisations. Without it there can be neither free India nor free Pakistan. If the two organisations fail their people *now* and the British Imperialists get the chance to impose the new constitution on India, they may formally partition India to sabotage for good the danger of a vast untied India-wide movement against their rule, but the Pakistan they will establish will not be sovereign, but under their own suzerainty.

*Therefore, the choice before the Muslim patriots is not one in which either the Congress or the British Government will be forced to ultimately settle with the League but that the League must go all-out to get into joint Front with the Congress. If the British divide India, they will of course, not get Free Pakistan, but their own people will suffer more, their own battle for real Pakistan will become more difficult. Their resources are undeveloped, British business will grab them. Their people are more backward; they will be mercilessly suppressed.*

### **Mutual Suspicion**

Just as the Congress has to live down its prejudices against the League, so has the League in relation to the Congress.

The Congress must not hope to win the League to fight for Indian freedom without accepting the principle of Pakistan first. Similarly, the League must not hope to get the Congress to accept Pakistan without giving adequate and prior guarantees that the



Pakistan State will not be based on the oppression of non-Muslims and will enter into equal and brotherly relations with the Hindustan state.

Rajaji's conditions contained in his formula do qualify Muslim freedom, if the just demand of Pakistan as a sovereign state is not *first* recognised. They become just demands from a brother organisation on behalf of brother peoples only *after* the Muslim demand for sovereign Pakistan is unequivocally recognised.

The Leaguers have a right to be suspicious of Gandhiji if he refuses to accept their right to form a sovereign state. Similarly Congressmen have a right to be suspicious of Mr. Jinnah, if he refuses to give brotherly guarantees that the Pakistan State will be democratically founded and democratically run.

Leaguers have as much need to reconsider their views about the Gandhiji-Rajaji formula as Congressmen have to re-examine their attitude to the Lahore resolution on Pakistan.

If the Leaguers cannot trust the Congress that there will be no Hindu domination in a free India, how do they expect congressmen to trust the League that the Pakistan State will not oppress the non-Muslims or that it will live in brotherly peace and work in brotherly co-operation with Hindustan? The League is making the supreme demand of partition. it must give the elementary guarantees that Pakistan State will be established democratically and will function, both internally and externally, as a democratic State.

Suspensions can be liquidated and trust inspired only if mutual agreement is based on just principles, and where the life and destiny of peoples are concerned, they can only be the twin principles of freedom and democracy.

*The tragedy of the Gandhi-Jinnah negotiations was that Gandhiji failed to see freedom behind Mr. Jinnah's demand and the latter failed to see democracy behind Gandhiji's conditions. And both stand by the principles of freedom and democracy !*

Let CONGRESSMEN first recognise the birthright of the Muslims before they call upon the League to accept the spirit and substance of Rajaji's conditions.

Let the LEAGUERS unhesitatingly realise the justice of Rajaji's condition, not as a concession to Hindu prejudices, not as bargain for Pakistan, but as essential conditions to allay suspicions and successfully establish a joint front for winning Pakistan itself.

Unless Gandhiji and Congressmen on the one hand, and Mr. Jinnah and the Leaguers on the other, can re-orientate themselves along the above lines, there is no hope of Congress-League agreement in the near future. At present, they are sticking to their specific viewpoints; the course I have outlined above would lead them towards a common viewpoint.

### **Common Platform**

Such a common understanding can be easily clothed in a suitable platform on the following basis :

(1) Establishment of United Front between the Congress and the League to realise the basic aims of both the organisations. No unilateral settlement by either party with the British Government.

(2) Unqualified recognition of the right of Muslim nationalities to establish independent sovereign states in Muslim homelands in terms of the Lahore resolution of the League.

(3) Pakistan State to be framed through a separate Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise of all the inhabitants, Muslims and non-Muslims alike in the Pakistan zone.

*(The Muslims hereby get their own Constituent Assembly as an expression of their right of sovereignty, but are not allowed to disenfranchise any section of the people. The Congress hereby gets a democratic verdict on Pakistan while allaying the Muslim fear of prior plebiscite to sabotage the establishment of Pakistan. The expression of people's will as demanded by the Congress and the exercise of people's sovereignty as demanded by the League takes place simultaneously.)*

(4) The principles on which the boundaries of Pakistan have to be fixed must be clearly defined, that the exercise of the right of Muslim sovereignty does not give a licence to trample underfoot the rights of non-Muslims, nor be made the starting point for claiming their lands.

The problem of boundaries fall under two categories.

(a) In the areas with a clear Muslim majority the Muslims have the right to form their State, and they go under the jurisdiction of their own Constituent Assembly.

(b) Major territorial adjustments cannot be claimed as of right but can only be made through mutual agreement with brother peoples with whom the common homeland is shared. (In my earlier

article. *They Must Not Fail*, I have shown how the problem of the Punjab and Bengal can be concretely solved on the basis of equality and justice).

(5) The independent States of Pakistan and Hindustan agree to mutual assistance in defence against all aggressors, and for economic reconstruction to end poverty and famines left by the British, and to build an era of co-prosperity for all our peoples through their own mutual help. To inspire mutual trust, the Congress and the League may pledge themselves to draft treaties now, to be ratified through proper State organs at the appropriate time.

### **Our Appeal**

We, Communists, place the above suggestions for the widest possible discussion among our fellow-patriots, both of the Congress and the League.

We have unbounded faith in the healthy instinct of our peoples. We have no doubt that the sovereign freedom of one section of our peoples can ever be a menace to the freedom of the rest. We are convinced that freedom based on democracy will lead to the full flowering of the native genius of all our peoples and lead to the emergence of an India of our greatest common glory, as free and strong as we can all make it, as prosperous and grand as we ourselves can build it.

We know that vast masses of Congressmen and Leaguers share similar sentiments. We have no doubt that the more they think over our proposals or think out similar ones of their own, the sooner will the Congress and the League come together.

We share the greatest respect for Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb as the two undisputed leaders of our peoples. We have no doubt that they will not let the situation drift. They have expressed the hope to meet again and called upon the people to opine on the issues that kept the two apart.

If all of us think hard enough, we will see for ourselves the path that leads to Congress-League unity. Then alone Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb will meet again, not to part, but to lead us jointly into a Free People's Hindustan and a Free People's Pakistan.

## RESOLUTION OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE

In the following we reprint the full text of the main political resolution passed by the plenum of the Central Committee (C.C.) of the communist Party, which was in continuous session during the last two weeks.

It was the first open session of the highest organ of the Party after its legalisation in August last. It was attended by thirty communist leaders from all over India, which included, apart from the members of the central Committee, specially invited provincial leaders.

The message of greetings to the jailed Comrades adopted by the session makes special mention of prominent leaders and C.C. members who still continue to be incarcerated. They are Comrades R.D. Bharadwaj, S.A. Dange, Soli Batliwala and S.V. Ghatge. The session sent a message of greeting to Comrade Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, prominent member of the Polit-Bureau who was unable to attend the session due to illness.

The main political report in the resolution was made by Comrade G. Adhikari which was followed by a co-report by Comrade P.C. Joshi. In this moment of the gravest national crisis and peril, the resolution as well as the report struck the confident and courageous note that it is also the hour of greatest opportunity for the patriots and the people of our country.

It condemns imperialist repression against the Congress and to the people. It points out that at a time when the imperialist bureaucracy is riding rough-shod over the people, it is really isolated from all sections of the people and is tottering.

It sharply brings out the fact that the so-called struggle for freedom unleashes the forces of disruption and anarchy which strengthens the bureaucracy and opens the gates to the fascist invader.

It sees in the growing forces of national unity the powerful weapon with which the patriots and the people can smash the game of the bureaucracy and win National Government to organise total national resistance to Fascist aggressors and achieve freedom.

Its ringing call is for :

—A political explanatory campaign to turn patriots away from the suicidal path of sabotage and to isolate and expose the Fifth Columnists, to stop national disruption.

—A countrywide campaign for National Unity, for the release of National leaders, for forcing the hands of the bureaucracy, for National Government.

—A campaign among the Hindu and Muslim masses for Congress-League unity the key to national unity and national salvation.

### **Imperialist Repression**

1. This plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, condemns unequivocally the military and police rule of blood and terror let loose by the imperialist bureaucracy against the people ; following the arrest of the national leaders on the 9th August in 1942. The main responsibility for plunging the country into a grave and perilous crisis, which not only undermines the cause of the defence and freedom of India, but also that of the freedom-loving peoples of the United Nations, must be fastened on the shoulders of the British Government *THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP HAD DECLARED THEIR READINESS TO UNDERTAKE THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNITING AND ORGANISING THE PEOPLE FOR THE ARMED DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY, IN ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED NATIONS AND THUS TO TAKE THEIR FULL SHARE IN THE WAR OF WORLD FREEDOM AGAINST FASCIST REPRESSION, PROVIDED THAT INDIAN INDEPENDENCE WAS REORGANISED AND A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT SET UP, ENJOYING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE AND SUPPORTED BY THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES.* But the British Government instead of pursuing the policy of winning the friendship and alliance of the Indian people, have persistently refused to part with power. Taking advantage of our national disunity, of the frustration and desperation of our national leadership, they have launched a war against the people, and are

provoking a countrywide conflict which is being fully utilised by Fifth Columnists, and Jap agents. Mr. Churchill speaking as the head of the British Government. has threatened to continue this diehard imperialist policy to its logical conclusion.

### **A Fifth-Column Incendiary Policy**

*2. THIS POLICY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS AN INCENDIARY AND FIFTH COLUMN POLICY. IT PREPARES FOR THE INDIAN PEOPLE THE GHASTLY FATE OF BURMA AND MALAYA.* It stabs the cause of the British and American peoples, of the Soviet and Chinese peoples, in the back. The Communist Party warns the British Government that if it persists in this policy, if it persists in its attempt to crush the Congress, it will only succeed in creating a common disaster for the British and the Indian peoples. The only way out of this perilous situation which grows more critical every day, is to stop this offensive of repression against the people and the Congress, to release Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders, to lift the ban on the Congress and to open negotiations with the Congress and the other political parties especially the Muslim league, for the establishment of a provisional National Government, fully empowered and determined to unite and mobilise the people for the defence and freedom of the country in close alliance with the United Nations. The Communist Party of India, which is pledged to forge national unity to solve this national crisis, appeals to the workers and the progressive peoples of Britain and America to bring pressure upon the British Government to concede these just national demands of the Indian people and thus clear the path of our common victory in this war of liberation.

### **Campaign of Sabotage and Anarchy**

3. The arrest of Congress leaders and the regime of repression which the mad bureaucracy is intensifying every day has called forth a countrywide upsurge of people's indignation and mass conflict. Bands of honest but blind patriots are seeking to lead this mass upsurge by organising it as a Congress struggle for freedom of the country. The technique of the struggle is, in the main, to organise sabotage of communications (cutting telegraph wires and removing rails. etc.), to stop production, and to paralyse, the apparatus of administration by all means. They hope by these

methods to bring about the fall of the Government and the transfer of power to the people. What they are achieving, however, is exactly the opposite. By giving this pernicious direction to the anger of the people, they are only organising the destruction of the national defence and economy of our own country and are giving free scope to the forces of anarchy. This state of things suits the Fifth Column elements and Fascist agents the most, who are attempting to seize the leadership of the movement and to planfully reinforce the efforts at destroying the defensive capacities of the nation. Secondly, as the movement spreads, there is dislocation in national economy and growing anarchy. This hits the people and helps the would-be aggressor. It disunites the people more and more and thereby strengthens the hands of the bureaucracy. Thirdly, the indiscriminate and merciless repression by the police and military, firing, lathi-charges, whipping and collective fines, further aggravate the situation. As a result of this, a section of the people is angered and is driven to more mad acts of sabotage, while the bulk of the people begin to feel demoralised and helpless. They give way to moods of despair and frustration, which nourishes pro-Japanese sentiments and saps the will of the people to resist aggression.

*THUS BETWEEN THE DESPERATE ACTIVITIES OF THE BLIND PATRIOTS WHICH ARE BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF MORE AND MORE BY THE FIFTH COLUMNISTS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE MAD REPRESSION OF THE BUREAUCRATS ON THE OTHER, THE DEFENSIVE CAPACITIES OF THE NATION AS WELL AS PEOPLE'S MORALE, STRENGTH AND UNITY ARE BEING UNDERMINED, MAKING THE COUNTRY RIPE TO FALL UNDER THE AXE OF THE FASCISTS.*

### **Where It Leads**

4. How did this situation arise ? It arose because the national leadership instead of going all-out to unite the people to rouse them to do everything which strengthens the country's defences against the fascist aggressors and forging mass sanctions for securing National Government for national defence, chose the opportunist path of inactivity, of non-embarrassing non-cooperation with defence measures, hoping thereby to win the national demand as a gift from imperialism. The Communist Party had warned against this policy,

which amounted to leaving the initiative and the fate of the nation entirely in the hands of imperialism. This only strengthened the obstinate attitude of the bureaucracy to deny power to the Indian people and led to the growing moods of frustration and defeatism among the nationalist masses. Instead of drawing from this the requisite lessons about the urgency of unity, the national leadership took one more step in the direction of its own opportunist policy. It advanced from non-cooperation and neutrality to a plan of active opposition to measures of national defence in the name of launching a struggle for the national demand.

The path, along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defences inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even loot and arson. It makes the national movement the prey of bureaucratic provocation in the name of struggle. Finally, it creates a mass basis for Fifth Column activity in the name of patriotism *IT IS A PATH IN SHORT, WHICH STRIKES AT THE VERY ROOT OF THAT PEOPLE'S UNITY WHICH ALONE CAN BE THE MEANS OF SECURING NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND ENSURING SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL DEFENCE.* Thus the policy of the national leaders instead of leading the people unitedly to compel the bureaucracy to concede National Government as an instrument of national defence and freedom, has left it free to hit at the people. It is leading the nation to a state of moral and political disruption and paralysis which far from helping the people to get their freedom can only clear the path of the invader. Such is the disastrous culmination of policies of not relying upon the strength of the people i.e. on national unity, and leaving the initiative in the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy.

### **Favourable Factors**

5. The situation can yet be retrieved. The Imperialist bureaucracy stands isolated and weakened as never before. The more it beats and represses the people, the more it earns the hatred and disgust of all sections of the nation. It has failed miserably in its efforts to build an anti-Congress front. Its political, economic and military policies are utterly bankrupt and it is quite incapable of uniting, leading and saving the nation in the crisis, created by the menace of invasion.



Secondly, a mighty potential basis for building national unity is there already. This broad unity, however, is by no means fully behind the present struggle launched by the Congress, on the other hand, sections oppose it. But it can be mobilised fully behind the main demands of the Congress, which are national demands, viz. recognise India's independence, negotiate for an all-round settlement, set up a National Provisional Government for mobilising the people for a people's defence against the aggressors in alliance with the United Nations. Such a national unity, broadest ever achieved, is within reach and if actually realised, will at once foil the game of the imperialist bureaucracy and bring it to its knees.

Thirdly, the demand of freedom and National Government for India is gathering ever-growing support among the working masses and the peoples of Great Britain and America. The growing strength of the anti-fascist national front in the countries of the United Nations, led by their Communist Parties and backed by the power and prestige of the Soviet Union, will stand behind our united strength to defend the country in alliance with them and make our national demand irresistible. Such are the favourable factors and such is the potential opportunity present in the perilous situation itself.

### **Unity The Way Out**

6 The Communist Party declares that the way out of the national crisis does not lie either in the direction of continuing the present brutal repression to crush the Congress as the imperialists, the loyalists, and the Royists suggest nor in the direction of intensifying the offensive against the apparatus of national defence, and production as the Forward Blocists, Congress Socialists and many Congressmen propose. The path of the crazy imperialists and that of the blind patriots together would lead to the same result, namely, to disruption and anarchy, to national frustration and desperation, which will serve only the interests of the fascist invaders and of no one else. *THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THE PATH WHICH THE PROLETARIAT AND ITS VANGUARD—THE COMMUNIST PARTY—IS PUTTING BEFORE THE PEOPLE, THE PATH OF ACHIEVING THE BROADEST POSSIBLE NATIONAL UNITY, BASED ON CONGRESS-LEAGUE UNITY.*

The slogan of national unity is not a mere formula, or just a

phrase to be flung in the face of those who advocate the path of so-called struggle. It is a revolutionary policy of rallying the broadest possible sections of the people for the defence of their common interests and the achievement of their most pressing demands. In the present world situation, it is the most potent and powerful and the only weapon which the people of India have to forge and wield in order to wrest power from the hands of the British imperialists, and to successfully defend the country against foreign aggression. Militarily, politically and economically the rule of the British imperialists is at present weaker than ever before. It is fast disintegrating under the hammerblows of the growing anti-fascist unity of the peoples of the United Nations. Its last and only weapon of withholding power from the people now is to keep them divided. *The disunity of the Indian people is the main basis of its remaining strength in India and which it utilises to drive a wedge between India and the peoples of the United Nations.* That is why complete national unity in the present circumstances must generate such a force before which the bureaucratic opposition must collapse. This is the decisive significance of national unity, of Congress-League unity, today! It is going to be the final blow that must compel India's present masters to sue for terms to the Indian people. Congress-League unity is not going to bring about a "change of heart" in Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery. It is going to transform the relative strength of the British imperialists and the Indian people. It is going to be the irresistible sanction of the Indian people behind their demand for a National Government.

### **The Main Task-Unity Campaign**

7. The central tasks to which the party must address itself today are three-fold :

- a) Organise a countrywide campaign for national unity ;
- b) Carry on persistent political explanation among workers, kisans, student militants and Congressmen, how the present struggle leads to destruction and anarchy and is suicidal;
- c) Continuous and widespread agitation among Hindu and Muslim masses for Congress-League unity.

**THE MAIN SLOGANS OF THE UNITY CAMPAIGN ARE : RELEASE MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE NATIONAL LEADERS, STOP REPRESSION, CHECK DESTRUCTION, SABOTAGE AND ANARCHY,**

*LIFT THE BAN ON THE CONGRESS, NEGOTIATE FOR AN ALL-ROUND SETTLEMENT, SET UP PROVISIONAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR INDIA'S DEFENCE.* The campaign may vary in form and in slogans from place to place, regard being paid to the varying development of the political situation. The aim should be to make the campaign as broad as possible and effective. It may begin as a campaign for signatures on a joint manifesto framed so as to secure the broadest local support. It may develop through a series of discussions and private meetings. It should further develop as a campaign for restoring peace and civil liberties, and culminate in the formation of an all-parties' defence committee for pressing for the withdrawal of collective fines, for tackling the problem of food supply and profiteering and for strengthening the morale of the population for resisting the fascist aggressors.

### **Congress-League Unity**

The slogans for Congress-League unity campaign should be:

(a) Congress-League agreement to set up a Provisional National Government for the successful defence of the country and freedom;

(b) The positions already taken by the Congress as well as by the Muslim League on the question of the right of Muslims in certain areas to self-determination, can with a given goodwill on both sides, afford a basis for settlement here and now.

On the basis of these two slogans, the campaign for unity must be run among the Muslim as well as Hindu masses. To the Hindu masses we must explain that what is just in the Pakistan demand, namely, the right of Muslim nationalities to autonomous state existence, including the right of separation must be conceded. It will give us unity now and lead to freedom. It will give us greater unity tomorrow and serve as a solid foundation for the freedom thus achieved. Similarly, we must get the Congress-minded people to recognise the urgency of the Congress conceding the right of self-determination of the Muslim nationalities and thus hasten the achievement of Congress-League unity. To the Muslim masses, we must show that Muslim independence can only come by joining with the Hindus and the Congress for joint action. Hence they must get the League leadership to move for Congress-League unity.

## **Tasks Among the Working Class**

**IT IS ABOVE ALL THE STRENGTH AND UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT WHICH MUST BE THE INDISPENSABLE AND FIRM BASIS FOR ACHIEVING THE UNITY OF THE ENTIRE PEOPLE FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL CRISIS AND THE WINNING OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.** Therefore, our first and foremost task must be to re-establish firmly the leadership of the Union and the Party in the industrial centres, and stamp out the efforts of provocateurs and of misguided patriots to drag the working class into the suicidal campaign of sabotage and anarchy. For this :

(a) We must conduct a politics explanatory campaign among workers, through street-corner and basti (chawl) meetings as well as through public meetings.

(b) Establish vigilance committees of militants in bastis (chawls) and mills to counteract panic-mongering, check rowdyism and the activities of irresponsible provocateurs intent on sabotage or stoppage of production.

(c) We must concentrate our energy and attention on Union work and pay meticulous attention to the day-to-day and outstanding grievances such as dearness allowances, bonuses victimisation, etc. Units of workers to win these demands fully utilising the existing legal machinery. Do not help provocateurs and political adventurers to take the initiative and thus bring about destruction of industry throughout end.

## FREE INDIA'S MILLIONS—FOR COMMON VICTORY !

Rajani Palme Dutt

At the moment of the supreme Axis attack throughout the world, when the fortunes of the United Nations are swaying in the balance, a nation of four hundred millions, one-fifth of humanity, has been treated as an enemy for the crime of demanding to be an ally. This is the fantastic but unfortunately true epitome of the Indian situation.

### Indian Crisis

When all the charges and criticisms in the world have been laid against the Congress leadership and tactics, the fact remains that the Congress was asking for the recognition of a free India as an ally of the United Nations; and this demand, because it was accompanied with the threat of civil disobedience in the event of refusal, has been met with police cells, lathi charges, whipping ordinances and firing squads *To have reached such a position represents a Bankruptcy of Statesmanship on the part of the ruling power which parallels the Worst military fiascoes of the war.* We cannot be satisfied with such a position. The situation in India is serious, but not irreparable. But we need to act quickly if we are to remedy it in time.

### India and the Second Front

The war is indivisible and the front in India cannot be separated from the front in Europe—or the absence of the front in Europe. While no Second Front has yet been established in Europe, a new type of front has been established by our rules—not in Europe, but in India. Not against Fascism, but against the enemies of Fascism. The arms that have not been used against the Fascist enemy have been used against unarmed popular crowds in India who were demanding the right of their nation to be recognised as an equal ally of the United Nations for the war against Fascism. *The same authorities who have been so lax and lenient with pro-Fascist agitators in Britain have been swift to incarcerate anti-Fascist*

*agitators in India. With one hand they are releasing daily more Fascists and Mosleyites from the prisons in Britain; with the other they are throwing anti-Fascists, tried and sincere leaders of the International anti-Fascist fight like Nehru, into prison in India. This is an intolerable situation, too closely recalling the policies of a Daladier, which led to evil consequences in France.*

### **Anti-Fascist Because Freedom Loving**

The Indian people are no allies of Fascism. They passionately desire national freedom, and have struggled for it for decades with signal self-sacrifice, heroism and solidarity, in the course of which they have built up through their National Congress a popular movement of millions without parallel in the world—the greatest national movement in the world next to the Chinese and our natural ally in the fight against Fascism. Precisely because they stand for freedom, they are opposed to Fascism. With the exception of an insignificant minority represented by Bose in Berlin, they no less passionately hate Fascism: their sympathies are with the Soviet people, with the Chinese people and therefore, with the cause of the United Nations. Their leaders, have understood and proclaimed, and have consistently taught their followers, with a breadth of international outlook, rare in a purely national movement, that the cause of Indian freedom is bound up with world freedom and with world victory over Fascism. For the past ten years they have played their part in the vanguard of the international anti-Fascist front of China, for Abyssinia, for Spain, at a time when many of those who to-day in the places of power in Britain dare to denounce them for failing to join up in the fight against Fascism were themselves praising and helping Fascism and betraying China, Abyssinia and Spain. *India is far more deeply and sincerely anti-Fascist than many national government ministers in Britain.*

### **The National Demand**

Therefore they demand a National Government now, not in opposition to the interests of the struggle of the United Nations, but in order to fulfil their part in that struggle by mobilising the full strength of the Indian nation, its manpower and resources, on a scale far exceeding anything at present attempted, and as only a popular Government enjoying the confidence of the nation can

do. Therefore they find infuriating the tepid Crippsian discussions, and bland patronising "offers" of hypothetical post-war constitutions, when their heart and soul in the present struggle which they know will determine the fate of India and the world, and when the only demand which matters to-day, the demand for a National Government to mobilise India's participation in the present struggle, is steadfastly refused. Not to understand that this profoundly international and anti-Fascist outlook, indissolubly linked with Indian National patriotism, is the burning impulse which drives such leaders as Nehru (however much we may disagree with the desperate expedient of civil disobedience as a weapon to attain these ends) is not to understand the beginning of the Indian problem. The demand of the Indian National Congress to-day is for the recognition of a free India as an ally of the United Nations, to mobilise the armed resistance of their people against Fascist aggression under a popular Government of their own leaders in whom they have confidence, but fully accepting the supreme military leadership and command of the United Nations. What sincere democrat or supporter of victory over Fascism could oppose such a demand ?

### **Cripps Mission Fiasco**

The Cripps Mission in April unfortunately destroyed this favourable position. It is vital to understand this crucial turning-point in recent political development in India, since the congratulatory haze of self-deception with which official propaganda in this country has endeavoured to cover up the failure has fostered illusions here, both as to the supposed magnanimity of the offer, or the beneficial effects of the contact, which are not helpful. The brutal truth needs to be faced that in relation to Indian opinion the Cripps Mission did immeasurable harm; and all the worsening of the political situation and exacerbation of relations dates from it.

The Cripps Mission failed, not primarily because of the highly dubious character of the post-war plan which it offered, nor because of the political divisions in India which were only subsequently brought forward as a reason for failure. **IT FAILED BECAUSE, UNDER COVER OF THE DUBIOUS POST-WAR PLAN, IT REJECTED OUT OF HAND AND RULED OUT THE ONE ISSUE THAT MATTERED - THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESPONSIBLE NATIONAL**

**GOVERNMENT NOW WITH EFFECTIVE POWERS FOR INDIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR.** This rejection, it was made clear, was independent of the agreement or disagreement of various sections of Indian political opinion. *The elaborate hypothetical post-war plan was only the window-dressing to cover the rejection of the one real present issue—This rejection ran counter to the entire range of Indian opinion, including the most moderate opinion. Not only the Congress, but every important Indian organisation turned down the Cripps proposals.*

### **Deterioration and Division**

Deterioration in the political situation rapidly followed. The British Government declared that nothing more could be done. The National Congress, frustrated in its desire to co-operate, after a period of hesitancy and divided counsels, slid down the inclined plane towards non co-operation. Leadership passed back into the hands of *GANDHIJI* whose frustration led him to the most perilous gamble in Indian history. Serious anti-Fascist leaders and advocates of co-operation with the United Nations, like *NEHRU* and *AZAD*, passed into the wake of *GANDHIJI* and his dangerous proposals for a non-co-operation campaign. Unscrupulous reactionary imperialist propaganda at once seized on the characteristic utterances of *Gandhiji* advocating pacifism and appeasement, to smear the whole national movement as capitulationist and ready to make peace with Japan, even though the personal viewpoints of *Gandhiji* in respect of non-violence and appeasement had been explicitly repudiated by every official Congress statement and resolution. The bombshell publication of documents seized in the police raid on *ANAND BHAVAN* which only exposed facts already well known from *Gandhiji's* public articles, illustrated this technique of preparation.

The Congress resolution on non-cooperation was put put in July and finally adopted on August 7 (against an opposition vote of 13, led by the *INDIAN COMMUNIST PARTY*, the cancellation of the ban on which was a recognition of its growing influence and strength). This resolution reaffirmed sympathy for the United Nations and the demand for recognition of India as a free ally under a National Government and armed resistance to Fascism in co-operation with



the United Nation, but added the threat of civil disobedience in the event of refusal. Reaction above had produced reaction below. *TO THE FATAL POLICY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS NOW ADDED THE FATAL POLICY OF THE CONGRESS, BOTH LEADING TO DIVISION IN THE FACE OF THE COMMON ENEMY.*

### **Indian Communist lead**

*The anti-fascist working-class, sections of the national movement represented by the Indian Communist Party had from the outset put forward a clear and consistent line in relation to the war of liberation of the united peoples and the path forward of the Indian national movement to liberation through a positive response to the tasks and responsibilities raised by the war. This line will be found set out in the booklet "FORWARD TO FREEDOM", BY P.C. JOSHI, SECRETARY OF THE INDIAN COMMUNIST PARTY, PUBLISHED IN INDIA IN FEBRUARY, 1942, AND SHORTLY TO BE REPRINTED IN THIS COUNTRY. They now set out their positive alternative proposals to non-co-operation in the present critical situation; to build up the united national front in India, including the unity of the Congress, the Muslim League and all other political sections on a common platform of resistance to Fascism; on this basis to press the demand for a settlement and for a National Government for India, while pressing the just Political demand : to co-operate wholeheartedly in the war effort and the mobilisation of the people ; resolute resistance to all policies of non-cooperation as fatal to the interests of the Indian people. But with the existing embitterment of national feeling and the reactionary refusal by British ruling circles of the demand for a National Government, this policy was not yet able to win the support of the bulk of the national movement.*

### **Allahabad & After**

At the Bombay A.I.C.C. session Congress showed every desire to reach a settlement and to negotiate. The Wardha resolution was revised to stress the desire for a practical settlement and for co-operation in armed resistance to Fascism. The final speeches of Gandhi and Nehru stressed the desire to negotiate. *NEHRU STATED IN HIS FINAL REPLY to the debate : "THE RESOLUTION IS NOT*

*A THREAT ; IT IS AN INVITATION AND AN EXPLANATION; IT IS AN OFFER OF CO-OPERATION.*" GANDHIJI'S subsequently published letter to MARSHAL CHILANG KAI-SHEK in July made clear that he " will take no hasty action, and whatever action is taken will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China : I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority." It was explained that the first step would be a letter to the Viceroy proposing negotiations before there would be any question of launching any action. The letter was begun immediately after the close of the Congress Committee, but was apparently never allowed to be finished. Within a few hours the wholesale arrests followed, which in turn provoked civil conflict and some sporadic disorders, and met by active repression with widespread police and military action.

### **Arrests Precipitate Conflict**

The arrests precipitated the open conflict and disorders, and in this way fulfilled the rôle of a direct provocation, almost as if to prevent the offered negotiations. It is difficult to see how this deliberate decision for a policy of repression in preference to negotiations can be regarded as justified by the situation. Once the disorders began, it was inevitable that the Government should take action against them. *BUT IT WAS THE ARRESTS WHICH PROVOKED THE DISORDERS, NOT THE DISORDERS WHICH PROVOKED THE ARRESTS.* At the moment of the arrests at the close of the Congress Committee session, there was no such immediate urgency to justify the argument of the supposed imperative necessity to precipitate the conflict. No order for civil disobedience had been given. There were obviously no plans of action ready. The aim of the Congress was manifestly to negotiate. The disorders which were provoked by the arrests were disowned by the Congress press. *It is not easy to escape the impression that the precipitation of the conflict in this way was dictated by reactionary interests in ruling circles which were more concerned to utilise a favourable tactical opportunity for crushing the Congress and the popular movement in India than in winning Indian co-operation against Japan.*

## **British People's Demand for India**

The present urgent situation is no time for standing on punctilio. But demands the instant and unconditional opening of negotiations with a view to finding the common basis for agreement in the imperative interests of both nations. But it can be confidently stated that this obstructionist outlook is not representative of the general body of labour and democratic opinion. Such press organs as the *Manchester Guardian*, *News Chronicle*, *Evening standard*, and also the *Daily Herald* (until the official Labour declaration compelled it to perform a somersault and reverse its policy) have taken a critical line on the arrests and urged immediate negotiation. *The Miners Federation National Conference on August 1, representing half a million miners unanimously adopted a resolution for the reopening of negotiations on the basis of the recognition of India's claim to independence.* Trial ballots in big factories have shown a ten to one vote for Indian independence. The campaign of the Communist Party has followed the lines of the National Conference resolution adopted on May 25, 1942, which declared

*'To win the co-operation of the 400 millions of India in the common struggle, we must recognise the independence of India as an equal partner in the alliance of the United Nations, and reopen negotiations with the National Congress for the establishment of National Government with full powers, subject only to such restrictions as the Indian people are willing to accept in the interests of India and of the common struggle against the Axis Powers.'*

This demand has won enthusiastic endorsement at crowded mass demonstrations all over the country.

There is no doubt that the influence of world opinion, and especially of the other chief partners of the alliance of the United Nations, will make itself felt in relation to the present Indian crisis, which is of urgent concern to all, and assist in reaching such a solution. But the primary political responsibility rests here in Britain, and it is the Labour and democratic movement of this country which must play the foremost part in fulfilling this responsibility. *We must exert our endeavours to overcome the present crisis and find a base for the free and honourable co-operation of the great Indian nation in the alliance of the United Nations for the defeat of*

*Fascism and the freedom of all nations, including India. We must exert our pressure on the Government to reverse its present policy and pursue a policy which will make such a settlement possible. We have here a duty to perform, equally in our own interests, in the interests of the Indian people, and in the interests of the common cause of Victory over Fascism.*

September 1942.

## *Lessons of Allahabad Conference*

# UNITY IS POSSIBLE NOW !

The Allahabad Conference had evoked but mild interest in political quarters. Meeting without the major political parties, the Congress and the League, the Conference was held to have slender chances of promoting national unity. It was not in a position to deliver the goods—this was the feeling of the average patriot.

Besides, what contribution could it make towards national unity, when the declared views of almost all those who were to attend, were opposed to any consideration of the Pakistan proposals of the League. It was thought that the conference would end in a fiasco, that it would be only another opportunity for C. Rajagopalachari to realise that unity was as far off as before.

'*Candidus*, ' a shrewd political critic anticipating the results of the conference observed as follows in the '*Times of India*' Dec. 9 : "Will he (Rajaji) succeed in wining over the 'unrelenting Mahasabha spokesman..... In any case, one gathers that the Mahasabha or the influential section of that body will not have any truck with Pakistan...it is equally unlikely that Mr. Rajagopalachari will have any response from the Sikhs. Nor has the South Indian leader much chance with the liberals like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who have not taken kindly to the partition of India.'"

## Shift in Political opinion

Like many other people, this critic totally failed to understand the deep shift in political opinion in this country. For the Allahabad conference, in spite of the secrecy hanging over its proceedings, most unmistakably disclosed an earnest desire on the part of all to forge national unity and readiness to abandon pet notions for the common cause.

Even a cursory glance at parties and personalities attending the Conference is sufficient to throw light on the inner proceedings and viewpoints advocated. The Conference was called by the standing

committee of the Non-Parties' Conference. The leaders of this body had criticised and sharply attacked Pakistan as a ruinous proposal.

It was attended by prominent leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha which as an organisation is almost fanatically opposed to any proposal for self-determination. 'Akhand Hindustan' has been its counter-cry to Pakistan.

### **Special Invitees**

And yet, a special invitation to attend the conference was sent to Rajaji who held diametrically opposite views on the question of self-determination and the League demand. Nobody had been denounced so severely by the Sabha leaders as Rajaji for his attempt to placate the League.

Another special invitee was P C Joshi, secretary of the Communist Party of India. The stand of the party has been well known. It has been the only party in India upholding the principle of self-determination as a matter of justice, equality and unity.

A few days ago it would have been impossible to bring these parties together to consider a common formula to solve the internal deadlock. There was nothing in common. At Allahabad they not only met but considered the 'most practical means of ending the deadlock'.

### **No Constitutional Formula**

What did these practical means to end the deadlock refer to? They did not refer to a mere political formula for a National Government, or a constitutional formula providing transfer of power. *EVERYBODY ASSEMBLED SEEMED TO HAVE REALISED THAT NO FORMULA HAD ANY SANCTION OR REALITY UNLESS THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS JOINED HANDS TOGETHER TO FORGE NATIONAL UNITY. Hence there was no airy demand for power without sanctions, nor was there any attempt to take a middling position between the Congress and the League asking the first to give up the demand for full power and the latter to give up all claims to Pakistan.*

The non-committal statement issued by the sponsors of the Conference is eloquent in this respect. "NO BYPASSING THE CONGRESS, NO BYPASSING THE LEAGUE—this realisation is writ large over the Allahabad proceedings. *The main objective of*

*these talks seems to be for solving the political deadlock and to that end to bring the Congress and the Muslim league and other parties together' - this earlier forecast of a press-agency seems to have been fully borne out.*

All will recognise that this outlook on the part of the Liberals and other prominent Hindu Sabha leaders marks an important step forward in the direction of unity.

### **Self-Determination the Main Issue**

From this it naturally follows that the Conference must have devoted its deliberations exclusively to the question of self-determination. Everyone now realises that national unity without a satisfactory solution of the self-determination question is an impossibility.

How far has it shown the way out ? what change in opinion has it registered ? One can only surmise from the meagre facts available.

The statement issued by the sponsors of the Conference speaks about *"the most practical means to end the deadlock"* The phrase assumes significant meaning when we remember that there were at least two persons present who had long talks with Mr. Jinnah. Rajaji had several talks. Dr. Shyamprasad Mukherjee also had a long talk. *ONE CAN REASONABLY ASSUME THAT MR. JINNAH MADE CONCRETE PROPOSALS BOTH TO RAJAJI AND DR. MUKHERJEE. MOST PROBABLY THESE PROPOSALS IN SOME FORM OR ANOTHER FORMED THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS.*

The deliberations of the Conference were, therefore, invested with extraordinary importance. *It was perhaps the first body in India discussing concretely the proposals of the League leader.*

### **League proposals**

One gets a glimpse into the proposals before the Conference from Rajaji's speech on the morrow of the conference : *"Don't imagine there is any proposal to hand over the punjab to any foreign power. THE CLAIM IS ONLY THIS MUCH THAT WHERE MUSLIMS ARE IN A MAJORITY IN ANY CONTIGUOUS AREA THEY SHOULD NOT BE SUBMERGED IN A LARGE MAJORITY OF HINDUS AT THE CENTRE. THE CLAIM IS NOT FOR THE SEPARATION OF THE WHOLE OF THE PUNJAB OR BENGAL. The claim is for separate*

Sovereignty for those tracts that have a majority of muslims. not with reference to the present boundaries but with reference to these particular areas.”

This is really a reiteration of the position taken by the League in its Bombay resolution, which brought the issue of self-determination on a National plane, nearer to the solution advocated by the communist party.

The full implications of this were perhaps not known to other political parties. They were perhaps put forward by Mr. Jinnah in his talks and were discussed at the Conference.

### **Hindu Sabhaites Reaction**

The non-committal statement issued by the conference shows *that the reactions to the proposal have not been violent. On the other hand, the reactions seem to have been extremely favourable,* if one is to judge from the spate of criticism levelled at the Conference leaders. Thus the Hon'ble Sir Chottu Ram, Revenue Minister, punjab, says in a press statement : “The reported decision of the Conference to submit to Mr. Jinnah a formula conceding in some form the principle of Pakistan will be deeply resented by all parties which have hitherto opposed any such concession.” And from the other side of the country comes the criticism of the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Shastri against the president of the Liberal Federation. “Is it, not self-stultification,” asks Shastri “to object to communal electorates and at the same time plump for communal and independent provinces ?”

*These angry outbursts only emphasise the unanimity or at least the large measure of support accorded to concrete proposals of self-determination. It is true the support must have been conditional. It is equally true perhaps that in this respect the Hindu-Mahasabha leaders may not have been of one view. Dr. Moonje's abrupt departure from the Conference has been commented upon by the press. Yet it is undeniable that the conference as a whole did reveal a definite shift in the position of Liberals and sections of the Hindu sabha on the question of self-determination.*

### **No Opposition on Principle**

**THE OLD ANTAGONISM BASED ON PRINCIPLE ON THE INDIVISIBILITY OF INDIA, IS GONE. THERE IS A READINESS TO**



LOOK AT THE PROBLEM AS A PROBLEM OF FREEDOM AND NATIONAL UNITY NO DOUBT NEITHER THE NON-PARTY LEADERS NOR THE SABHA LEADERS WILL EVER LOOK ON SELF-DETERMINATION AS A QUESTION OF EQUALITY, JUSTICE AND RIGHT. TO THEM IT IS STILL A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY. Yet the reality of bureaucratic repression, the denial of power, the insolence of the authorities, the danger of aggression, have compelled them to face the issue squarely

They have not been the only people to learn from experience THE LEAGUE AND ITS LEADERS SEEM TO HAVE LEARNT EQUALLY FROM THE RECENT PAST. ONE OF THE REASONS WHY SELF-DETERMINATION EVOKED SUCH FAVOURABLE RESPONSE IN ALLAHABAD SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE FACT THAT IT WAS PRESENTED SHORN OF ITS FANTASTIC CLAIMS AND PROPAGANDIST TRAPPINGS

### **Big Achievement**

The results of the Allahabad Conference thus reveal the growing urge towards unity and the growing desire to reach a satisfactory solution of the self-determination issue. The sections most fanatically opposed to self-determination are no longer united in their opposition. A large Section is favourably disposed to solve the problem of national unity on the basis of self-determination proposals. The most extreme opponent of Pakistan—the Hindu Mahasabha—is itself showing a cleavage of opinion.

This is the big achievement, the result of the Allahabad meeting. Notwithstanding the carping criticism of critics, the Conference no doubt holds high hopes of national unity.

### **Bridge to Unity**

However, the Conference can only be a bridge to unity. By itself it cannot bring about all-Parties' unity. In the absence of the Congress the lead and initiative has to be taken by the Hindu Sabha and the League. The Progressive section of the Sabha like Dr. Mukherjee, will no doubt strain every nerve in this direction. But the key lies in the hands of president savarkar. The coming session of the Hindu Sabha will decide whether national unity is to be immediately achieved, or not.

## **Dispel Suspicion**

Secondly, the League and its leaders also bear heavy responsibility. There is deep-rooted mistrust about the League and Mr. Jinnah. Will they stick to their promises ? Will they really support the demand for National Government and freedom ?

These are the questions agitating some elements who would otherwise straight-away support self-determination. The communist party knows that there is no reason to doubt Mr Jinnah's word that he stands for Indian freedom. But the mistrust does exist in other ranks and to-day hampers settlement.

Mr. Jinnah's refusal to condemn repression, his refusal to demand the release of Congress leaders, his statements, which often justify the arrests, have deepened this suspicion. It is for the League to remove it and make speedy settlement possible.

## **Close the Ranks !**

*THE ALLAHABAD CONFERENCE HAS SHOWN THAT UNITY IS POSSIBLE, IS IMMEDIATELY REALISABLE. IT HAS SHOWN THAT THE MAIN HURDLE IS BEING SUCCESSFULLY CROSSED BY OUR POLITICAL PARTIES THROUGH SHEER WEIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES. IT HAS ALSO REVEALED A COMMON UNDERSTANDING THAT WITHOUT CONGRESS-LEAGUE UNITY THE BALANCE CANNOT BE TURNED AGAINST THE BUREAUCRACY.*

The Congress has practically accepted the principle of self-determination. Acceptance of the Principle by other parties, especially by the Sabha, will enable the Congress to admit it unambiguously and effect Congress-League settlement. There is already complete unanimity on the question of National Government with full power and National Defence.

*The task before all other parties, therefore, is to close their ranks on the basis of self-determination and demand immediate release of congress leaders and a National Government at the centre. The Allahabad Conference has shown that this can be done.*

## COMMUNIST PARTY LAUNCHES A NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN FOR UNITY WORK FOR CONGRESS- LEAGUE AGREEMENT

Our ancient country is in peril. Our great people face the fate of the Burmese, and the Malayans. The Fascist invader is artful and ruthless.

We need the courage of warrior-heroes to fight the Fascists to death.

We need the unity of our people, the total mobilisation of our men and materials, national unity like that of the Chinese and the Russians, for the successful defence of our Motherland.

We need a Government which will be one with the people and of the people, which can rouse our millions and command their confidence.

Otherwise it is death for our people, destruction of our nation—India lost to the Japs, adding greater strength to the Fascist enslavers, heaping undying shame on freedom's fighters.

But where is it that we stand to-day ?

An alien bureaucracy is sitting on our neck and refuses to part with power to the patriot-leaders of the country. Can a foreign government rally the nation behind the armies at the front? Can an irresponsible government protect the people when it is itself afraid of people's unity and shuns people's mobilisation ? Can a government which, at such a perilous moment, imprisons the nation's revered leaders and goads the patriots to desperation, be trusted to defend the country ? Would any sane government slander the national leadership as Fifth Columnist? The way the British rulers are going means losing India to the Japanese Imperialists rather than hand it over to the rightful owners—the Indian people—led by their trusted leaders.

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*Taken from : "PEOPLE'S WAR" 18.10.1942, page 4-5*

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The last words of the national leaders, at the Bombay A I. C. C. Just before their arrest, were full-throated declarations :

—That the world stood divided into two camps, of the Fascist imperialists and of the peoples, of freedom and of enslavement.

—That India's rightful place was with the United Nations.

—That this war must be won for Indian freedom, for world freedom.

They, therefore, demanded power at the Centre, recognition of Indian freedom and its implementing through the establishment of a National Government for national defence.

Their demand was just and in the interest of our entire people. That was the way to get the patriots to lead the people, organise the successful defence of the country and fight for a free India in a free world. It was the demand to rally the Indian nation for freedom's battle.

Instead of yielding to the national demand, the Government arrested the national leadership and created a national crisis. The Government now adds insult to injury, by asserting that the national leaders are responsible for the disturbances. It created the crisis. It struck the first blow, to arrest the leaders was to ask for people's fury to flare up. It continues the criminal course. To keep the leaders behind the bars is to prolong the crisis, provoke the people. For the havoc and horror that we witness and suffer the responsibility rests on the imperialist rulers and not on the national leaders.

The nation unitedly demands their immediate release, all parties all sections of the people, all honest sons and daughters of India. All realise that there is,

No solving the national crisis

No organising national defence

No fighting for national freedom

*WITHOUT WINNING BACK THE NATIONAL LEADERS AT THE HEAD OF THE NATION.*

The communist Party of India declares that the release of the leaders is the first step out of the crisis. The imperialist rulers insolently refuse this. All Indian patriots must unite to demand it.

*THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA DEMANDS THE RELEASE OF THE NATIONAL LEADERS TO END THE CAMPAIGN OF SABOTAGE AND DESTRUCTION.* Their very presence amidst the

people will ease the situation, isolate the Fifth Columnist and calm the enraged patriots. Our people will listen to their trusted leaders but will never be cowed down by police terror.

The Communist Party of India appeals to all non-Congress patriotic organisations to consider the release of the Congress leaders as their first and foremost task. Without the National Congress, there can be no national unity, without national unity no National Government, without National Government no national defence. We will lose our country to the Japanese Fascists if we cannot win the release of the Congress leaders from the British rulers.

The Communist Party of India appeals to the peoples of the United Nations to press the British Government for the release of the Congress leaders, with the same vigour and earnestness as if they were their own national leaders. The Congress is the premier political organisation of our great people, its leaders will proudly lead our nation into a free and equal alliance with the United Nations. This was and remains their proclaimed aim, there is no greater anti-Fascist in our country than Nehru. In your own interest act, for the release of the Congress leaders.

***BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL!***

- Join with us in the Release Campaign
- Hold mammoth rallies and demonstrations
- Non-stop street-corner meetings and chawl meetings
- Help us to organise a mass signature campaign
- Rouse the people in the name of patriotism.

The handful of imperialist rulers cannot resist the united demand of the Indian people. Indian patriots, all together, can and must win the Congress leaders back in our midst to solve the national crisis, forge national unity, win National Government, organise national defence and fight for Indian freedom shoulder to shoulder with freedom-loving humanity.

—**COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA**

**To All Communists And Sympathisers**  
**COMRADES,**

Organise a countrywide crusade for national unity, to take the nation out of the crisis, win a National Government, organise

national defence and realise national freedom. This was the slogan of action, given to every party Member by the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee. This letter calls upon you to go into action to implement it.

### **Worsening Situation**

The first thing you must realise is the gravity of the situation, the like of which our country has never known before, the like of which our Party has never faced before.

From August 9 onwards, we are in a *NEW* situation of *NATIONAL CRISIS*. The alien Government is not merely sitting upon our people, but through repression it is destroying national patriotism, i. e. national morale, the only spiritual strength of the nation behind national resistance to the Fascist invader. The patriots in blind fury are destroying national defence, i. e. doing exactly the opposite of what they should do. They think they are struggling for freedom this way but they are, without knowing it, helping the fascist invaders. The way the situation is drifting it can only get worse and never improve, repression can only feed the fire, sabotage can never lead to our salvation. The present national crisis will culminate in the calamity of our nation's death, if we don't intervene *IN TIME AND EFFECTIVELY*. We must act and we will win.

### **We Can Burst Through**

How does our Party act? By persuading fellow-fighters for freedom, by rallying the people. Every Party Member before going into action must be inspired with the self-confidence that:

We will succeed in persuading the patriots because they are doing exactly the opposite of what they should do. The patriot will give up the campaign of sabotage and join the campaign of unity the moment we can make him see which leads where, the former to Fascism, the latter to Freedom.

We will succeed in stopping repression the more we succeed in stopping sabotage, the more we succeed in rallying the people for unity. The very madness of the foreign bureaucrats is the sign of their utter isolation and not strength. They can be made to retreat one step back for every step forward that we can get our people to take.

## **The Only Path**

Comrades ! Bolshevik determination must be behind your activity and it should be based on the realisation that there is no other path before our people except unity, all the other alternative policies lead to defeat, demoralisation and ultimate death.

Tell the patriots that unity is no mere waiting for Congress-League agreement to come but *A PATH OF POSITIVE ACTION*. It is learning to have faith in the patriotic bonafides of our fellow-patriots and implementing that faith here and now. by joint work. It is going out to rouse the might of our millions. creating confidence in their own strength, i.e., their unity.

Show the patriots how the most widespread urge for unity is already there and that all our Party seeks is to transform it into a mass movement for unity through a countrywide campaign.

If we take the initiative, the patriots and people will rally. They are feeling frustrated but are not demoralised. Repression has not cowed them down, they are eagerly looking for a way out.

## **Unity Week**

*WE MUST ACT FOR ALL WE ARE WORTH OR WE WOULD BE GUILTY OF BETRAYING OUR PEOPLE, OF BEING ONLOOKERS, WHEN THE FATE OF OUR COUNTRY HANGS IN THE BALANCE, WHEN THE FATE OF HUMANITY IS AT STAKE.*

The Polit-Bureau, to carry out the decision of the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee, is fixing the week beginning from November 1 and concluding on November 8 as the National Unity Week, to be organised throughout the country.

## **Plan of Work**

The immediate task of every Party Unit from the highest to the lowest is to make the *BANDOUST* and take steps to carry out the instructions given below.

Right away hold meetings of every cell and collectively study the C.C. Resolution and take detailed practical decisions for the Week as to who will do what and by when. CHART JOBS. FIX QUOTAS.

Fix up reporters to hold group meetings of the militants and Party supporters, to read out and explain the Party Manifesto,

“Unity and Victory” (P.W.No-13.) and to inspire them to actively work for the unity drive. The first step to make the unity campaign successful is to not only throw all Party Members into it but *MOBILISE ALL PARTY SUPPORTERS* as well, each one of them doing his allotted task in an organised manner and thus himself rise to Party Membership by working for the Party and rallying the people.

*THE MOST INTENSIVE AGITATION THAT OUR PARTY MEMBERS HAVE EVER MADE MUST MARK OUR ACTIVITY DURING THIS WEEK* and the peak must be reached on November 7 the anniversary of the Great November Revolution of our Soviet brothers. Hold the inaugural rally on November 1 and the concluding rally on November 8 and fix up the other days to popularise any one single slogan of the Unity Campaign.

*Every Party cell must become a propaganda squad* and be on the streets, holding street-corner meetings, singing patriotic songs, rousing the spirit of unity. Pay particular attention to the Muslim localities. Fix up the number of street-corner meetings to be organised by each squad and see that they are held and no excuses made.

*EVERY SQUAD MUST SELL “PEOPLE’S WAR” ON THE STREETS* Remember the Central Committee has called upon you to increase the circulation of “People’s War” 100% by November 7. Ask every casual buyer to visit you at the local Party Office, if he wants to become a permanent buyer and work for unity.

*EVERY SQUAD MUST MAKE COLLECTIONS FOR THE TWO LACS PARTY FUND* during this week. Collections must be made in every meeting held. The more you can make our people see that the policy of unity is the only patriotic policy, the more they see that our Part is the most selfless, disciplined and revolutionary organisation and the more readily they will pay cash to keep our Party going and regard it as their own. Two anna tickets are being printed and sent to all principal headquarters of the Party. Get them for yourself.

*EVERY SQUAD MUST DISTRIBUTE THE PARTY HANDBILLS* (two of these are being printed on this page and more will appear in the next issue). Get them reprinted locally or write to the *PEOPLE’S PUBLISHING HOUSE* and send Re.  $\frac{1}{4}$  for every hundred copies you order. The press comrades are already working double shift but



they will work three shifts if necessary. you only indicate your need and send the cash.

**EVERY SQUAD MUST ORGANISE A MASS SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN** on the basis of the two handbills being printed on this page. Keep records of the total signatures secured by each squad. Get them to enter into socialist competition, in their capacity to convince the patriot's to mobilise the people. In places where meetings are not allowed mass signature campaigns and closed-door meetings will be the only form of activity possible. But this must be organised everywhere, it will make you not only talk to the people but also listen to them and thus teach you to rally them better

If we work with the same spirit and tempo that saved Moscow and Leningrad, the same spirit and tempo that animates the defenders of Stalingrad, we will succeed in turning the corner, the most perilous one in the life of our nation.

**THIS UNITY WEEK IS BEING HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE PARTY ALONE**, to take the Party policy whole and undiluted to the people. If we can make the week a resounding success, show our fellow-patriots that the people can be inspired with the unity slogans and made to rally, seeing in unity the way out for our country, then we will find that they themselves will want to give up the campaign of sabotage and join in the campaigns of unity. Again many of those who are passive to-day and feel helpless will line up behind the unity campaign. It will then be possible to run the unity campaign under united front auspices.

**THE UNITY WEEK IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE UNITY CAMPAIGN.** After the week is over, immediately send reports to "**PEOPLE'S WAR**" analysing the rich experience you gain and the plan of what you propose to do to make it a non-stop campaign. There is no resting on our oars for any Communist. Our Unity Campaign must not stop till Congress-League agreement is achieved and National Government won. The Unity Campaign cannot stop till it is braches all the 400 millions of India organised in one front of national resistances to the Fascist Invader.

Unity now, more unity next, unity always till final victory has been won. To work for it is the glory of every Communist.

With Lal Salaams,  
P. C. Joshi

## ON PRODUCTION POLICY AND T. U. TASKS

*(Resolution passed by the enlarged plenum of the Central Committee of the communist party of India, 22nd September, 1942.)*

This meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India declares that not only has the government failed to mobilise the industrial and productive resources of this country in the common fight against Fascism, but that its policy constitutes a growing menace to the safety of the country and only ensures chaos and collapse with the first impact of Japanese invasion.

The Government throttles the development of war industries and thereby undermines national defence. It is not able to utilise the existing industry to its full capacity and satisfy the normal requirements of the people. Its transport is breaking down, causing food famine and chaos in the country leading to a perilous situation in face of an enemy attack. Its production policy is based on a share-out of the gains of exploitation and appeals only to the profiteering motive of industrial interests. There is no organised plan but that of organised profiteering and mere distribution of war orders. Through its Supply Department, it merely secures priority for state orders at the expense of the people. There is no plan to increase production to keep the normal life running, on the other hand, profiteering is already leading to a breakdown of normal life. With prices soaring high articles of industrial production are getting beyond the reach of the people. Between high prices and the demands of the Supply Department, people are forced to go without the necessities of life.

There is no plan for protecting production and the normal life of the people against enemy attacks and invasion. No systematic air protection in industrial plants against air-raids, no plans for rescuing and evacuating industrial machinery, no plans to see that the economic life of the nation, its power of economic resistance, continues in face of any grave emergency.

The Government imposes unbearable economic burdens on the working class to satisfy the profiteers. It attempts to coerce the workers to accept them by using force and repression by making repeated inroads on freedom of organisation and strikes. It attempts to run production through ordinances, prohibition of strikes, and free use of the police force. Its formula of running production can be briefly summarised as—ban all strikes under threat of penalty and force the workers to accept insufferable conditions of life.

Against this policy of starvation and coercion, the indignation of the working class breaks out into strikes and angry riots. The policy of the Government forces the workers to stop production. It continuously jerks the industrial machine when it ought to be running smoothly and at a headlong speed. It alienates the workers from production, makes them hostile to it. It makes production synonymous with brutal exploitation and turns them away from building any national resistance through productive efforts.

With the continuation of this policy, stoppages and strikes become more and more frequent and production gets disorganised. With the growing hatred of the worker towards it, the will to run production for national resistance is daily sapped and the ground is prepared for a complete and total collapse of the production machine in face of enemy bombing and attack. The lessons of Bombay and Calcutta in February last when thousands of workers evacuated on the rumour of Japanese bombing is an unmistakable portent of events to come.

The Government fails to secure the cooperation of industrialists for an allout plan to organise production. It shows open partiality to foreign concerns and creates lack of confidence and hostility among the industrialists. By denying national Government to the Indian people, by throttling industrial development, it has driven the national bourgeoisie to desperate acts of lockouts and deadlocks in production.

### **The Industrial Bourgeoisie**

The Indian industrialists stand opposed to Fascist aggression and fully support the demand for National Government. They stand for increased production and the development of industrial resources. They correctly accuse the Government of throttling industrial development and immersing the safety of the country.

Yet in practice, they do not display a national outlook towards production. They do not unite with the workers and the people to remove the bureaucratic stranglehold over production, they do not invite the co-operation of the workers to solve production problem'. they fail to gather the workers' strength behind them and present a joint demand for increased production. They thus hinder the struggle for National Government and national production.

Instead they pursue a policy which pits the workers against them and disunites the struggle for increased national resistance. They oppose Trade Union organisations which alone can successfully mobilise the mass of the workers for the production struggle. They refuse to deal with them to settle the grievances of the workers. They take advantage of the repressive legislation to impose unbearable economic conditions. Their policy only results in growing stoppages and strikes.

In their utter helplessness, they now resort to production deadlocks and lockouts to bring pressure on the bureaucracy. This policy only leads to chaos and defeats the national objective of organising production to resist the invader.

### **Communist Party & National Production**

As against the policy pursued by the bureaucrats and the industrialists, the Communist Party pursues a policy based on organising production for total national defence and resistance.

Recognising the vital role played by production the party declares that production can no longer be treated as the special concern of the profiteer or the bureaucracy. On the other hand, it has become the concern of the people whose very existence and freedom depend upon it. Popular national control over production exercised through a National Government enjoying the full confidence of the people is the basic demand of the hour.

To increase national resistance to the invader, it is necessary to increase and extend production. It is equally necessary to do away with the chaos in transport and industry, created by the bureaucracy's incompetence and utter disregard of the needs of national resistance.

To save production from growing dislocation, it is necessary to defeat the mad policy of the Government and industrialists which drives the workers to stoppages and strikes.

To protect the economic life against enemy attacks it is necessary to compel the Government to grant adequate protection to workers and industrial plants: to evacuate plants and machinery from danger zone, to do everything possible to save every machine and plant.

To build production as a weapon of national resistance, it is imperative that problems of maintaining and expanding production should be solved through joint consultation among employers, Government and the workers. Organisation of workers councils in Production units, their recognition in solving problems of production in avoiding waste is absolutely essential.

The outlook of the Party on production is a national outlook. It regards production as a vital national duty which has to be performed to save the country from economic collapses, and to ensure and strengthen resistance to the invader

It is based on snatching the initiative from the hands of the bureaucracy whose criminal policy threatens to undermine national resistance by creating economic chaos.

It is directed to meet the vital needs of our people who tomorrow will be bearing the brunt of Japanese attack. It is directed to sustain them in this fight for our country's own freedom

### **Producer — The Unifier of the People**

In implementing this policy, the Party relies primarily on the working class which runs the entire production.

Thanks to the merciless exploitation, the working class to-day is not only indifferent to problems of increasing and organising production, it is hostile to it. So long as this hostility continues, production will be ruled by profiteers and the bureaucracy to the growing peril of our country. Production cannot and will not be run in any grave emergency, it cannot be expanded so long as the producer does not stand by it.

The task of the Party, therefore, is to win over the working class to a national outlook on production. The workers must be inspired to look upon their daily job as a patriotic duty. They have to be made conscious of the fact that their labour is part of national labour to save the country. They have to be taught that it is their national duty to demand better production, to expand it, to remove all obstacles created by profiteering owners, to demand consultation so that they can play a worthy part in the struggle against Fascist

invaders. They alone can compel the Government and owners to move in the direction of the popular will.

Neither the Government nor the capitalists can resist this united pressure. Both are completely dependent upon the working class. Its powerful pressure, exercised to strengthen the nation's resisting capacity is bound to have its way.

Soon the working class will be called upon to perform acts of heroic patriotism. It will be its responsibility to keep railway communications intact in face of enemy bombing; to continue production in face of enemy attack; to transfer entire industry from one place to another to save the resisting capacity of the nation. to make every factory a centre of national resistance, every machine a weapon of national freedom.

Unless the deep patriotic instincts of the working class are roused to action, unless he is fired with the zeal to defend his country, unless he looks upon production as his patriotic duty, the working class will prove unequal to the task, give way to panic and desert his post. The logic of bureaucracy's policy will assert itself.

The patriotic struggle of the working class to organise national production inevitably unites the people for common resistance to the invaders. It is bound to draw in the entire people of our country who will soon understand that production must be kept up in their own interest, that it cannot be left in the hands of bureaucracy and the capitalists. The heroism of the working class in face of an enemy attack, will be a model of patriotic duty fulfilled and will inspire our countrymen to acts of greater heroism and courage.

By fulfilling its role as the patriotic producer, the working class directly unites and leads the people against the fascist invader. At no other time, was its role as a producer so directly linked with its political leadership. If he fails in one, he fails in the other.

Such is the vital importance of Party's outlook on production.

### **Partial Demands & Production**

Obviously the working class cannot be won over to this policy by mere propaganda and agitation. So long as production is synonymous with brutal exploitation, it will continue to regard it by as a slavery and drudgery and not as national duty.

As has been pointed out, the policy of the Party can be

implemented only by defeating the policy pursued by profiteers and sanctioned by the Government.

Defence of partial demands of the working class is of paramount importance in the execution of our policy

The interests of the working class cannot be surrendered to the capitalists in the name of war production. Such a surrender is not only unjust and brutal but antinational as it hits at the initiative of the workers to maintain and expand production.

Rights of organisation cannot be surrendered to the ordinance rule of the Government. On the other hand, more rights are required and have to be won if the working class is to lead in organising national production.

The working class can never surrender its right to strike nor will the Party ever consent to give it up under any condition.

The Party raises the following five demands as immediate demands of action :

(a) Full compensation to meet the intolerable rise in the cost of living; adequate dearness allowance

(b) Immediate grant of bonus.

(c) 25% rise in basic wage.

(d) Recognition of Trade Unions and full freedom to organise mill and factory committees in every plant and industry, to liquidate grievances and production problems.

(e) Limitation of profit in the interest of the people.

To neglect these demands is to ruin our production policy. To win them is to win over the working class to play its role as a patriotic producer.

At the same time, it is not enough only to win partial demands. Every partial success must lead the workers to understand their role as producers for the nation, for national resistance; must create a revolutionary consciousness towards their daily jobs. Defence of day to day interests is inseparable from our production policy.

### **Enforcement of Partial Demands & Strikes**

While on no account are we prepared to surrender the right to strike, yet it is our policy to minimise stoppages and strikes, consistently with the defence of the interests of the working class and the nation.

Minimisation of stoppages and defence of day-to-day demands

is not a mere phrase with us. The two are not contradictory. Pre-war experience is no guide in this respect.

Both the Government and the owners realise that to goad the working class under present conditions to organised action on a countrywide scale is to invite ruin for themselves. The working class has recently often compelled them to retreat before its united strength (attempt to enforce ten hours in Bombay). They are able to pursue their policy of reckless exploitation only in so far as they are not unitedly opposed.

The fear of united direct action forces both the Government and owners to seek compromise and settle disputes. That is why we take advantage of every machinery to settle disputes, conciliation courts and other machinery which we formerly accepted only under duress.

Our policy then is to seek settlement of disputes through negotiations backed by the united strength of workers and resort to direct action only when we are compelled to do so.

### **Our Tasks In The Trade Union Field**

Our policy throws new responsibilities on our Trade Union work.

Our task is to mobilise the entire working class through the Trade Unions for our patriotic policy on production, for national popular control over production.

This means that the Trade Unions must develop the requisite strength to set in motion the workers in all industries to defend their daily interests. They must be in a position to mobilise the entire class and not merely advanced sections. They must, in particular, mobilise the workers in strategic industries, transport, iron and steel, coal mines.

Mobilisation of workers already organised by us is not enough. Our Trade Unions are weakest in strategic industries, Our working class base is weak in the threatened provinces.

The scope of the trade union work must immediately extend; it must extend to reformist trade unions; it must extend to strategic industries; it must extend to unorganised workers.

Our policy seeks to unite the entire class for the common task. The task cannot be achieved by splitting existing trade unions.

A systematic plan of trade union expansion embracing all sections alone meets the needs of the situation.



This also means a tremendous improvement in the day-to-day work of all trade unions. No more can we content ourselves with general agitation, as in the past. Every issue of trade Union conflict has to be correctly understood, its importance correctly gauged in the light of our general policy. Facts and figures regarding cost of living, independent statistics, reasonable demands based on those facts must be – basis of our agitation. The tendency to put forward exaggerated demands making settlement difficult has to be avoided at all costs. Failure to justify the workers' case before courts must be regarded as a serious crime. It will force a strike on the workers through sheer incompetence of the leaders.

The tendency to neglect day-to-day work, quick despatch of grievances and substitute for it general political propaganda must be sharply attacked.

Our trade union agitation must be precise and concrete. Our trade union work must be perfect. Our trade union organisations must once more become the mass mobilisers, the leaders and organisers of the workers in the struggle for partial demands.

With our growing strength we have to lead the All-India Trade Union Congress towards our Policy. It is our weakness that enables the T.U.C. to sit on the fence. To-day our production policy comes violently into clash with the policy pursued by blind patriots. In the name of creating deadlock they direct their attack against production and transport: they attempt sabotage, they exploit the economic grievances of the workers to bring about indefinite strikes, they sow panic among the workers: they seek to goad them into acts of violence and sabotage. They create a favourable soil for fifth-columnists.

In their mad frenzy, they not only disorganise production but also disrupt the organised strength of the working class.

This anti-national offensive against production has to be beaten back. This planned disruption of the working class ranks must be defeated.

The lesson of the last few days already shows that the offensive could not succeed where strong ties bound the workers to their trade union organisations, where they had already earned the confidence of our workers as the champion of their daily interests.

This means that to protect the workers against this offensive on questions of economic demands, our T.U. organisations must not

allow the initiative to pass into the hands of promoters of indefinite strikes or fifth-column provocateurs.

They must increase their general agitation a hundredfold to strengthen the confidence of the working class in its T.U organisations and its political party, the C.P.I.

They must expose the tactics of indefinite strikes, as means of disruption, and positively ask the workers to fight against disunity. They must warn them against sabotage as the work of fifth columnists. They must ask them to hold peace when they are on the streets.

And finally they must expose the entire game as an anti-national campaign, ruining the nation and the workers.

To conclude, the production policy of the Party is of a piece with the political line of our Party.

The Party fights the war as a war of national freedom. Production, therefore, is production for freedom. It is to be organised as national production. The working class must lead this battle for the people, for the nation. It must secure its vital demands as part of the general advance against imperialism, as part of national defence.

In this battle for production, the trade unions must come forward as the mass mobilisers of the working class, enabling it to unify the entire people for national defence and national popular control over production for National Government and national freedom.

## FORWARD TO FREEDOM

### A Welcome Publication

Here is at last a book which supplies an urgently felt need by all political workers in India. At a time when the danger of foreign invasion grows hourly, when the menace of fascist enslavement hangs like a 'Damocles' sword on the heads of our people, at such a time every earnest patriot wants to know what is the way out ? In this book is set forth in a simple, straight-forward and forceful manner the Communist way out—the path which the Communists are putting forward as the only possible and revolutionary policy for the Indian people in the present phase of the war. The Communist Party's policy was put forward in the All India Students' Federation Conference at Patna (Decr. 1941), in the Wardha Session of the A.I.C.C. (Jan. 1942), in the All India Trade Union Congress at Cawnpore and at the All India Kisan Council Session at Nagpur in February, 1942. Some articles have appeared in the Press which have not been satisfactory at all. So far no full and exhaustive and correct statement of the Communist policy and their plan of action was available for the public and the political workers to study.

### Authoritative and Correct

This is an authoritative publication of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. It is written in the form of a report speech on the new revised resolution of the Polit Bureau entitled, "India in the war of Liberation" which is printed separately. In March, 1940 the communists brought forward the "Proletarian path" and the publication, "Unmasked -Parties and Politics." In the imperialist phase of the war, these publications served to popularise the basic slogans and the policy of the Communist Party of India for that period among the people. These became a weapon in the hands of the Communists and their

co-workers, which helped them to carry forward and popularise these slogans among the masses, to carry out that policy. It is hoped that the Resolution and the Letter to Party Comrades which is printed separately, as well as this publication should serve a similar purpose and play a similar role in the new period.

### **Why This Introduction ?**

This brief introduction to these publications is in the main addressed to Party Members and sympathisers, who have studied the previous party documents on the New Line, especially the note from the Jail Comrades and the P.B. Resolution of 13th December, 1941. Our purpose is to draw the readers' pointed attention to the fact that these new publications correct some fundamental errors and deviations which were contained in the Jail documents and which were to a certain extent, reflected in the P.B. Resolution (13.12.41) itself. Our Jailed leaders rendered an inestimable service to the Party by producing a document which enabled us to make the turn from a wrong line and in the direction of a right one. But they did this with an analysis and arguments which contained some basic errors. The result was that the agitational approach as well as the practice which followed from it was wrong. This was discovered during the course of further discussion inside the Party as well as on the basis of the practical results.

In this introduction, we will only point out where these new publications differ in formulation and approach from the two documents mentioned above. A complete criticism of these documents cannot be presented here. The object here is to bring out the main points which have been corrected and show how and where they were wrong.

### **What 22nd June Revealed ?**

When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union on the 22nd June, 1941 in the midst of the Second Imperialist war a transformation takes place in the entire international situation, in the situation in every country. The first thing to be grasped about this transformation is that it revealed as if in one flash, the complete bankruptcy of the imperialist bourgeoisie. It revealed in what insoluble conflicts and crisis they had landed themselves. Simultaneously it revealed that a mighty base was created for a world wide unity of the peoples which could now fight the war against Hitler-Fascism and its allies

as an anti-fascist war of liberation of all the peoples, under the leadership of the Soviet Union. That Hitler who in August 1939 dared not attack the Soviet Union, now found himself strong enough to do so certainly showed the weakness of the working class and the peoples of the capitalist world. In fact, the outbreak of the Second Imperialist War itself revealed this weakness. The working class and the peoples of the capitalist world were not able to forge that anti-fascist peoples' unity which was necessary to defeat the fascist aggressors and their abettors, in alliance with the Soviet Union. They were, therefore, also unable to forge that unity to end the imperialist war. But this was only one aspect of the question, and was by itself only an half-truth. The other and the more decisive aspect of the question, was that Hitler's attack revealed the deepest and the acutest crisis of the world bourgeoisie, and that it created the basis for the mightiest rally and counter-assault of the workers and the peoples of the world against fascist imperialism. What was a battle for world domination between two rival block of imperialism, became transformed, with the entry of the U.S.S.R., into a battle waged by the peoples of the world, under Soviet leadership, for their own liberation, for the defence of the U.S.S.R., for the destruction of fascist imperialism which was seeking to enslave the whole world.

### **Root of Panic and Defeatism**

In 1933, when Hitler-fascism, rose to power in Germany, Comrade Stalin had evaluated the situation similarly. He said: 'Hitler's victory did show the weakness of the proletariat but let it not be forgotten that it showed a hundred times more the weakness of the bourgeoisie !' This applies to the situation that is developing since Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union with and added force. Hitler's blow did not fall upon an unprepared Soviet Union. It was expected and well-prepared for before and during the period of the Non-Aggression pact. But there are some who look at the situation as nothing but one of weakness of the proletariat and of the U.S.S.R. They fail to see the deep crisis and quandary of world imperialism as a whole. They underestimate the new political role of the USSR and of the gigantic world peoples' unity. They view the situation with panic and defeatism. They say : The Soviet Union—the only country where the proletariat held power, is now

attacked. Let us thank our stars that the imperialist government of Britain and America have been forced to ally themselves with the USSR to defend their empires. Let us first fight back and defeat the Axis powers in alliance with imperialism, without raising other issues, and then pass on to the offensive against imperialism as a whole for achieving Socialism. Such is the outlook of those who look at the new situation with panic and defeatism.

To look at the new alignment as "an alliance with imperialism", as "a united front extending to the imperialist government", which is essential to defend the Soviet Union, and which requires that the issue of the independence of the oppressed nations be relegated to the background for the present in order "not to break the front"—all this is the politics of panic and defeatism and has nothing in common with Bolshevism. But it is just this tone which rings out of the analysis and the arguments of the jail document. It is just this tone which also peeps out of the P.B. Resolution of 13th December 1941.

### **Outlook of Stalinist Internationalism**

But such is not the outlook of Stalinist proletarian internationalism. The situation which came into existence with the attack of Hitler was not of quandary for the world proletariat and the peoples, in which they had to "heave a sigh of relief" at the 'political windfall' of Britain and America allying with the USSR. On the other hand, it was a situation of the gravest and acutest crisis of the imperialist bourgeoisie as a whole, bringing about sharp division in their ranks internationally and nationally, a situation which had created the conditions for the mightiest alliance of the peoples of the world under Soviet leadership, for effectively utilising this division, and for destroying the fascist imperialist aggressors and achieving the liberation of all the peoples of the world.

Comrade Stalin and Molotov have in their historic speeches, persistently underlined with supreme confidence the world liberationist character of the war. Hitler's attack upon the USSR was gamble against the class revolution. He failed. He hoped to create a world front against Bolshevism. He got instead a world front of the peoples fighting for their freedom under Soviet leadership and for the utter destruction of fascism. The war which the Soviet people are waging for the defence of their land of Socialism, will

merge with the war of the peoples of Europe, America and Asia for their independence and democratic liberties. Destruction of fascism and the liberation of all the peoples of the world was the war aim of the Soviet Union. This was the meaning of the transformation. This is how Stalinist internationalism looked at it.

### **How This Book Presents It**

The analysis and arguments presented in the book to describe and prove the transformation of the character of the war correspond to reality. There is no empty juggling with the categories of imperialism, fascism and Socialism. The analysis goes to the root of the matter, to the new regrouping of the class-forces that lead to the transformation of June 22nd that has developed since. It shows the growing split and the crisis in the bourgeois ruling circles. It shows the invincible growth of peoples' unity throughout the world under Soviet leadership, under the stress of war. It shows how the proletariat has to broaden out the antifascist war as a war of peoples' liberation all round, fighting back anti-liberationist sections of the bourgeoisie in the effort. For, as the war progresses, it becomes clearer and clearer that the war against world fascism can only be won as a war of peoples' liberation and that the three objectives: destruction of fascism, the liberation of all the peoples of the world and the defence of the Soviet Union—all merge into one single task. This is the first distinctive feature of the international analysis given in this book. This is where it corrects the deviations of the Jail document and of the first P. B. Resolution.

### **“Class Analysis” In Jail Documents ?**

The Jail comrades set out to give us an analysis of the new situation in terms of class positions. But actually, they failed to do it. They gave us a very superficial “analysis” in terms of “Imperialism”, fascism and world proletariat. It ran something like this : Nazi victories in Europe had weakened British Imperialism immensely, called its very existence into question. “British Imperialism was no longer a gatherer of world reaction. Its aim for the sake of its own safety, could no longer be immediate destruction of the USSR. On the other hand, its interests demanded destruction of Nazism at a time when the latter was organising for an attack against the USSR”. The world proletariat in order to defend the Soviet Union had also to concentrate its main fire against

Nazism. The task before the world proletariat was to utilise one imperialism against another, to save the Soviet Union. "If this temporarily helps one imperialism against another, it nonetheless weakens it against the international proletariat". "Irrespective of the fact that certain imperialist powers are interested in fighting Nazism out of imperialist motives, the issue involved — the safety of USSR — is a class issue, an issue for the millions, and makes the war a peoples' war notwithstanding British participation. It is the war of international working class to defend Socialism and safeguard the future revolutionary movements."

We have reproduced almost in their own words the gist of the main argument by which the jail comrades proved the character of the war. Its real implications must be clearly grasped. Herein lies the root of the error which has gone down among our ranks. It is the basis of the mistakes which our comrades are committing, mistakes which make them appear as Royists, mistakes which isolate them from the nationalist-minded masses and prevent them coming forward as the leaders and unifiers' of the people behind the policy of entering into the war of national defence and liberation. That is why this root of the error must be clearly grasped.

### **Not Marxist-Leninist But Machiavellian Strategy ?**

The strategy they put before us is not that of the proletariat nor of Marxism-Leninism. It looks more like bourgeois-Machiavellian strategy, devoid of class analysis. They tell us in all seriousness that "the international role of British imperialism has temporarily changed". That is why we have to temporarily ally ourselves with imperialism to defend the Soviet Union. The world proletariat is cornered. It has to defend its Fortress of Socialism. It finds that British imperialism is impelled by its own need to destroy Nazism. Hence it utilises this alliance against its main enemy. We are told, the question of independence of colonies must not be raised now. It will ruin the alliance. Later the document applies the "logic of united front", to the front which now includes the British imperialist government. We are told, the proletariat "takes initiative in preventing crossfiring", which means the question of the independence of colonies is not to be raised or else it may break the front. We are even told that the International had in the anti-fascist period even agreed not to raise the question of the independence of colonies in the interest of a broad anti-fascist front.



## **Where It Leads To ?**

All this is certainly not class analysis of the present situation nor has it anything to do with Marxism-Leninism. It is more akin to right opportunism of the Royist type. It is Royist "internationalism" which says Imperialism is playing a progressive role on the international plane : we defend the USSR and destroy fascism in alliance with it, and then opens the phase of world revolution when the fight for national and social freedom will begin all over the world. Where does this type of internationalism lead to? It leads to reliance upon imperialism and not upon the proletariat. It fails to grasp the international role of the Soviet Union of the 40's, of victorious Socialism, of the Soviet Union which can now come forward as the leader and unifier of the peoples and nations fighting for their freedom against the fascist world enslaver. It fails to grasp the role which the proletariat in each of country has to play as the leader and unifier of the people to lead them forward to full co-operation with the USSR, towards a victorious war against fascism, despite the reactionary imperialist sabotage. That is why such an "analysis" leads to a policy based on "the political windfall" of imperialist alliance and not upon the invincible might of the USSR, the champion of the freedom of nations, the leader in the anti-fascist peoples' war, and upon the unifying revolutionary role of the proletariat in every country.

## **Failure To Grasp Stalin's Lead**

Our jail comrades certainly did not want to follow the Royist line nor did they want us do it. The deviation arises out of the failure to understand the full significance of the transformation of June 22nd. Comrade Stalin summed up the essence of the new situation and its future development in a few pregnant sentences of his historic speech of July 3rd. He said that the war which the Soviet Union was waging would merge with the war of the people of Europe and America fighting for their independence and democratic liberties against enslavement or against the threat of enslavement by fascist armies. On November 6, 1941, he emphasised the fact that it was a war of liberation for the peoples of Asia as well, and pointed out the example of Iran. Comrade Stalin and the Soviet leaders have summed up the new situation in a very simple way :

1. With Hitler's attack upon the USSR and the alliance of

Britain and America with the Soviet Union, the whole world situation is fundamentally altered. Hitler-Fascism and its allies now become the main enemies of all mankind; they are waging a war for world domination and are threatening the peoples of the whole world with fascist enslavement.

2. The war which the Soviet Union is waging against the fascist invaders now merges with the war the peoples of the world are waging for their independence and democratic liberties and against fascist enslavement and its menace. *In other words, the war waged by the peoples of the world, led by the Soviet Union, against the camp of fascist imperialism, is a world war of all peoples' liberation and can only be victorious as such.*

### **Two Main Factors**

Wherein does Comrade Stalin see the main and the principal weapon of the defence of the Soviet Union, and for the destruction of the fascist gangsters? He sees it in two things : firstly, in the invincible might of the Soviet Union, the indomitable unity of its people, which is the product of "the final and irrevocable victory of Socialism" in the Soviet Union, and secondly, in the united front of the peoples of the world rallying round the Soviet in their fight for liberation from fascist enslavement. There is a third favourable factor which ensures the victory of the USSR and of the peoples of the world over the fascist world enslavers. It is the crisis and quandary of the world bourgeoisie, the cleavage in the camp of their ruling circles on a world and on a national plane. But let it be remembered that the world proletariat can effectively utilise the antagonisms in the camp of imperialism in the international as well as in the home arena only by relying firmly on the two main factors mentioned above.

### **Key To Proletariat's Grand Strategy**

To forget the two main factors and to imagine that the defence of the Soviet Union and the victory over the fascist aggressors can be secured only by making "one imperialism fight another" is not Marxism-Leninism. It cannot lead either to a correct and full understanding of the new situation nor to the working out of correct agitational and practical line for each country. This is exactly what has happened in the Jail documents. These documents do not characterise the war against the fascist aggressors as a war of all

peoples' liberation, led by the Soviet Union, which can only be won as such. That is why they fail to bring out the crucial fact that the struggle to concentrate the main fire on the fascist aggressors, the struggle to utilise the antagonisms in the camp of the imperialists is simultaneously the struggle for uniting the peoples of the world in a single front of a liberationist war under Soviet leadership. It is the struggle for uniting the people in every country for the defence of the nation, for the freedom of the people, for the final victory of fascism in collaboration with the USSR. It is the struggle for isolating and crushing the pro-fascist and anti-liberationist element in the ruling circles of the countries ranged against the fascist aggressors. This is a war for world liberation under Soviet leadership, and that it can only be won by its becoming a world-wide *peoples'* war of liberation for *every* people—this sums up the grand strategy which the Soviet Union, and the Communist Parties throughout the world are developing to win the war against the fascist aggressors.

### **Crux of Soviet Political Lead**

What is the crux of the political strategy of the Soviet Union in this war? It is to bring about the world front of the peoples' war against the fascist aggressors. It is to make this front a very broad one, to draw in it "social groups, classes, and nations, which are not adherents of proletarian dictatorship, or adherents of the social revolutions". The war aims which the Soviet Union champions in this war correspond to this need. These are, the annihilation of the Hitlerite criminals, the liberation of all the peoples, the achievement of a peace which ensures to every people its independence and democratic liberties. It is by coming forward as the gigantic leading force fighting for these liberationist aims that the Soviet Union unites the people of the world in a victorious war against the fascist enslavers, and at the same time, isolates those groups in the ruling circles in the imperialist countries which seek to carry on pro-fascist and anti-liberationist policies. When pro-fascist agents tried to spread the disruptive propaganda that the Soviet Union wants to Bolshevise Europe, Comrade Lozovsky gave it a crushing rebuff. He said: The Soviet Union fights to liberate every people from the grip of the fascist enslavers, and want to see that the people take their destiny into their own hands. It is for every people to choose to build what social order they want.

Comrade Stalin in his speech on November 6, 1941, underlined the same point. Let it be clearly understood that the war for the defence of the Soviet Union is simultaneously the war for the freedom of all the peoples. It has to be won and can be won on that basis alone *Destruction of fascism, liberation of all the peoples, The Defence Of The Soviet Union—These Are The Three Inseparable Aims Of The War. Not "Alliance With Imperialism" But A Grand Freedom Alliance Of The Peoples Of The World, A Struggle To Isolate And Eliminate The Open And Concealed Imperialism And Anti-Liberationist Element From The Bourgeois Governments Allied With The USSR—This is The CRUX OF Soviet Strategy To Win The War Against Fascism.* Let it not be forgotten that the victory in this war of world liberation, in this war for the DEFENCE of the base of proletarian revolution, will not only mean the destruction of fascism and the liquidation of world empires, but it will also mean the extension of the world of Socialism. But it is hardly necessary to speculate on this perspective. For the only way to open it is to, here and now, do everything to win the war of liberation.

### **Communist Tactics In Capitalist Countries**

That the war is now a war of liberation of all the peoples who are directly under fascist enslavement or are menaced by it, and that it can only be won by fighting it as peoples' war in every country in the closest collaboration with the Soviet Union, these two facts determine generally the tactical and agitational slogans of the Communist Parties in every country ranged against the fascist powers. The Communist Party in an imperialist country, in Britain, for instance seeks to build the united national front in its own country behind the three slogans : 1) all-out effort to defeat Hitler, to defend the freedom and the democratic liberties of the British people against the menace of fascist armies; 2) a 100% collaboration with the USSR in the joint war 3) liberation of colonies and of India to strengthen the world front of freedom against fascism. These three demands correspond to the urgent and vital interests of the British people. This is proved by the mass upsurge that is welling up in Great Britain during the last eight months behind these slogans. The Communist Party fights for these demands by leading a powerful peoples' effort to raise production, to win the war. The Communist Party's fight to raise the united

national front behind these slogans is at the same time a fight to throw out the pro-fascist and anti-liberationist elements from the government.

### **The Policy of British Party**

The communist party of Britain does not say: British Imperialism is an ally. we must not raise the question of Independence of India ; that would scare away the imperialists and we would not get the military help we need to defend the USSR. This banality is worthy of the Royists and of the Social-Democratic leaders. The C.P.G.B. recognises the rapidly growing cleavage in the ranks of the British ruling circles and forges the wedge of the united national front of the people to drive in that cleavage and to expel the reactionary, and imperialist elements from the government. The tactical line and the mobilising slogans of the C.P.G.B. have met with a great success. This is proved by the fast-moving developments in Britain. They correspond to the best interests of the British people and to the interests of the defence of the USSR as well. With Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union and British Government's alliance with the USSR, Britain's war against Hitler becomes for the British proletariat and the British people a war of national liberation, a war in the defence of their independence and democratic liberties against the menace of fascist invasion. The British proletariat can only win it by uniting the British people for achieving the closest co-operation with the Soviet Union, for converting it into a war of liberation also for the Indian and The colonial people. In other words, the British proletariat cannot win the war for the British and for the Soviet peoples unless they direct the wedge of peoples' unity against the pro-fascists in the Government who hinder all-out effort in co-operation with the USSR, and against the imperialists who prevent the liberation of India and the colonies.

### **Where Jail Documents Fail**

The jail documents look at the question of the defence of the Soviet Union as an isolated issue. They imagine that the world proletariat can solve it by utilising "the political windfall" of the alliance of the imperialist governments with the USSR and by merely bringing pressure upon these governments to give full military aid to the Soviet. They look upon Hitler-fascism as the main enemy

only because it has attacked the USSR and not because it is the leader of the Axis Powers also, which are threatening the peoples of the whole world with fascist enslavement. They miss the whole class significance of the perspective which Comrade Stalin outlined in his speeches. Comrade Stalin was neither talking with the tongue in his cheek nor was he indulging in mere propaganda, when he said that the war of the soviet people will merge with the war of liberation of the peoples of the whole world against the menace of fascist enslavement. That was just how war against fascism had to be won, and The Soviet to be defended. The struggle which the proletariat in every country is waging for winning the war against fascism and for the defence of the USSR, was a political struggle. It was a struggle for unifying the people, for taking the war into its own hands, for making it a PEOPLES' WAR after Soviet and Chinese model, for fighting back pro-fascist and anti-liberationist elements in the ruling class. It was not just a struggle to bring pressure upon the government to give full and effective military aid to the Soviet Union. This is just the reason why the jail documents are unable to give the Party correct agitational slogans and a correct tactical line which would enable it to place itself at the head of the people, uniting them for the defence of the country, for its freedom, for winning the war of liberation for itself and for the Soviet and for the world. The P.B. Resolution (of 13.12.41) does work out correct agitational slogans and emphasises the key task of achieving national unity. It mentions that it is a war of liberation but fails to make that the central thesis, and that is why it too drifts back into arguments reminiscent of "alliance with imperialism".

### **How This Book Corrects**

In the present book, all this confusion is cleared up. The starting point here is the stalinist thesis that the Soviet's war is the war of liberation for all the peoples. That is why the question, how is it India's war, is simply answered because it is India's war for her own liberation. The author of this book does not raise the conundrum of how the national oppressor has become an international ally. He simply says, the Indian people and their great political parties have to unite to take control of the war into their own hands from the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy. He does not say that British Imperialism is our international ally and so we must not raise the

issue of independence now and split the anti-fascist front. On the other hand, he points out how it is the imperialist reactionaries in the British Government who by refusing to release India for freedom, are weakening the anti-fascists front of the peoples. He gives us the correct agitational slogans which would enable our Party to swing our people as a broad national front into the war of liberation. This he is able to do because he is not hampered by the incorrect idea of maintaining a "united front extending to the imperialist bureaucratic government" and "preventing cross-firing" He puts forward the correct agitational slogan because he starts from the correct tactical line. The key task, he points out, is to unite the people and the political parties on the basis of the realisation that this is our own war the war of our national defence, the war of our national freedom, which we have to take into our own hands.

### **Correct Tactical Line for India**

The author points out how in the period of the imperialist phase of the war, the whole nation and its principal parties stood out. True, the national bourgeois-leadership did not move the masses against the imperialist war. On the other hand, they sabotaged the mass struggles and kept the whole national front in a state of animated suspension, hoping for a compromise. But there was no surrender to imperialism on the part of any major party. To-day, when the character of the war has changed, when the menace of fascist Japanese invasion hourly grows, when it is urgently required that these parties should move to unite themselves and the nation to snatch the war out of the hands of imperialist bureaucracy, they again sit and wait, expecting a gesture from imperialism. Can we say that the leadership of these parties is all pro-fascist and they are now waiting to make peace with Japanese fascists, expecting freedom at their hands? No, this cannot be said of the bulk of our national leadership. On the other hand, we clearly see a cleavage in the ranks of the leadership. A progressive democratic section does realise the new character of the war as a war of liberation and wants to see India ranged alongside the Soviet Union and China to fight for her own liberation as well as that of the world. But it too waits helplessly on imperialism's gesture. It does not see the changed and immensely favourable situation when a national mass

upsurge led by the united leadership of the country could at once make the Indian peoples masters in their home, and controllers of their own war. It does not see the weakness of imperialism, the strength of the powerful allies our freedom's movement to-day has in Great Britain, America, Soviet Union and China. If the National congress were to take the initiative to forge a broad national unity by arriving at a united front agreement with the Muslim League and other parties and organisations, it could lead a gigantic mass upsurge. It could sweep away the obstacles which the imperialist government to-day places in the way of the Indian peoples' urge to unite with the progressive forces of the world to secure its own liberation. There are two powerful factors which favour such a development. First is the sound patriotic instincts of our people and parties, born of 30 years of mass national upsurge. Second is the utter bankruptcy and the complete isolation of the British imperialist government in India from every section of the people. Its prestige is gone. It cannot defend the country against the foreign invaders. In England, the broad sections of the people are growing daily more and more impatient with the wooden-headed imperialist policy of its government which prevents the Indian people from defending their own country and thus creating a situation which can only result in strengthening the fascist enemy and endangering the freedom of the British people themselves. In short, in this extremely favorable and urgent situation it is the job of the Communist Party to come forward with such agitational slogans, with such campaigns of action which will enable them to rouse the patriotic feelings of the people, wake up to the urgency of the situation and make the whole country ring with one single slogan—UNITY-UNITY-UNITY! It is the job of the Communist Party to lead the way for unity:

For national unity of peoples and parties to defend the country,  
 —national unity to take the nation's war into nation's hands,  
 —national unity to win National Government,  
 —national unity to organise the nation's war of defence against the would-be invaders as a peoples' war after chinese and soviet model,

— national unity for winning the war of national liberation in common with the Soviet, with China and with the other peoples of the world.



## Tasks Facing Communists

Communists must realise that we are facing the most critical time in our country's history. The menace of foreign invasion, the menace of disruption of our country, of fascist enslavement moves daily nearer. The one job before the communists to-day is to come forward as the unifiers of the people. Through their explanations, their agitation, their campaigns of action, they must lead the masses to the realisation that there is only one way open to the Indian people and their political parties, that is *to sink their differences. To unite in one supreme effort to repel the invader, to defend the country to win country's liberation*. To fail to unite to-day to break the stalemate and to defeat the obstinate policy of the government on the basis of the strength of the people, is to pave the way for our country's disruption. The Communists must learn to put across their line of "National Unity to take nation's war into its own hands" in a manner which must strike a sympathetic chord in the heart of every patriot. We have to lead the people to our position through their own experience, through their nationalist consciousness. You cannot put across the line by occasionally staging small demonstrations under the slogans "Soviet War Peoples' War—Peoples' War our War". Nor can you do it by merely demonstrating for "Open the New Front to Aid the soviet".

## Anti-Japanese Agitation

What we need is a persistent anti-Japanese aggression agitation among all sections of the people. In every strike meeting, in every workers', students' and kishans' meeting, anti-Japanese agitation must be conducted, exposing Japanese atrocities, Japanese imperialists' predatory imperialist aims. The one thing we have to fight against is the complacency and defeatism spread by disrupters, who whisper "what can we do and after all, Japanese can't be much worse than the British." Our agitation against Japanese aggression must be coupled with fraternisation with the Chinese people. China has shown us how a united national movement enables even a poorly armed people to hold back a superior foe for 5 years, to inspire the nation to wage a fierce peoples' war. What China could do India can and inspite of her present slavery. India must immediately build its fighting national unity to smash the imperialist obstacle

which prevents it from taking its war of defence into its own hands. If she does so, she can then multiply the strength of that unity a hundredfold and beat the Japanese invader back.

### **Struggle For Unity**

Through Anti-Japanese campaign, through India-China alliance campaign, through the Friends of the Soviet Union movement, the communists must seek to rally ever wider mass of people and all sections behind the single slogan : "Unite the Parties and lead the people to make the war our own, to defend the country, to win freedom."

Communists must realise that the task of the defence of the Soviet Union to-day merges with the task of uniting the people to enter our own war of national defence, of smashing imperialist obstacles to it. For if we fail to unite the nation to resist the Japanese invaders, we would be only strengthening Japan to attack the USSR. By forging national unity for our national war of defence against Japanese aggression, we aid and defend both the Soviet Union and China just as they aid and defend us by fighting their own war. Such is the logic of the world war of liberation.

### **Not Arguments But Lead For Unity**

Communists come forward everywhere taking the initiative to co-operate in Civil Defence in protecting the people and in allaying panic in cities and in villages, independently and in collaboration with the national parties. Communists must realise that they cannot put across their line by mere arguing. They must learn to carry on their line by mere arguing. They must learn to carry on their mass agitation, which appeals to the patriotic instincts of the people and leads them towards unity. They must organise mass campaigns for the release of prisoners. For Aid to the Soviet and China, and against Japanese aggression, securing the co-operation of all parties, and leading the people to the realisation for the urgency of unity for the war of national defence.

These are the immediate tasks which face the Communists to-day. They have to address themselves to them, with a clear conception of the whole line and with a correct grasp of the tactical line with the correct agitational slogans. This is just what this book should give them. Let them read it carefully, think over the analysis and arguments advanced therein. Let them clearly understand where

they got the line wrong, and what fundamental errors of The Jail documents and of the First P.B. Resolution this book corrects. If they do it, they will find that this book will serve the same purpose for our movement that the “Proletarian Path” and the “Unmasked-Parties and Politics” served in the imperialist phase of the war.

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## NATIONAL UNITY NOW

“Pakistan,” according to him (Jinnah), “in a nutshell, is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign state..”

“If Pakistan as defined above is an article of faith with him, indivisible India is equally an article of faith with me. *Hence there is a stalemate.*”

—Gandhiji in Harijan, 26.7.1942.

“I am told there is going to be a ‘big move.’ This threat and intimidation is intended to coerce a distressed and shaken Britain to accede to Gandhi's demand. I can only say that Britain will be making the greatest blunder if she surrenders to the Congress in any manner which would be detrimental to the interests of Muslim India.”

—M. A. Jinnah in a press statement issued on 22.6.1942.

In these two recent utterances of the leaders of the two great parties of our country, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, is summed up the deadlock that faces us on the issue of national unity. Without national unity, without the broad unity of the masses—both Hindu and Muslim—freedom cannot be won, that was always axiomatic in our independence movement. It is more so to-day when the Japanese and German aggressors are preparing to pounce upon our Motherland. We need national unity not only to organise a national people's resistance but also to win National Government, enjoying the confidence of the people and power to make that resistance really effective. This is, of course, self-evident. Unity was the first pre-requisite for striking for freedom. The imperialists knew it as well. That is just the reason why they always sought to disrupt that unity, to spread distrust between community and community. Did that, however, mean that unity could not be achieved before imperialist rule was ended? Not in

the least. To say that, is to deny the possibility of freedom itself. We can and have to unite, despite imperialist rule, to defend our country and to win National Government. But this is just the truth which our national leadership has ceased to believe. This is the root cause of the deadlock. In other words, our national leaders admit defeat before the imperialist bureaucracy : we are powerless to unite our own people in the face of your disruptive influence. This is an admission of bankruptcy, of a complete lack of faith in the people and their healthy patriotic instincts.

At one time, with Gandhiji, communal unity was one of the four pillars of Swaraj. To-day he says communal unity will only come after the third party is removed. "Unity will not precede but succeed freedom." (Harijan, 7.6.42). The Wardha Resolution reiterates the same thought :

"The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide-and-rule."

If you are incapable of counteracting the imperialist policy of divide and rule among your own people, you are obviously incapable of winning freedom. The policy implicit in the Wardha Resolution is based on such a bankrupt supposition. For, it amounts to begging of the British Government to give you freedom first so that you may be able to unite and then form a National Government to defend your country and the world cause of freedom, in alliance with the United Nations, afterwards. If this is denied to you, you propose to launch a "struggle," which in the present situation, is National Harakiri. All this arises from the bankrupt thesis that communal unity is impossible until the British voluntarily withdraw.

How does it come about that the leadership of a national movement which has to its credit the achievement of the largest measure of unity of the Indian people during the last 20 years or so, now stands helpless before the question of Hindu-Muslim unity ? How does it happen that Gandhiji says "India indivisible" is an article of faith with him and Jinnah says "Pakistan" is an article of faith with him, and there is stalemate and gaping disunity among our people ? The Indian National Congress stands and has stood consistently for the complete independence of the country and for the democratic rights and liberties of the people. In the free India of Congress conception

there will be religious freedom, the protection of culture for every section of the people. Why should not the Congress programme, which visualises free and democratic India, united and indivisible, attract the Muslims ? Or rather, if it was adequate for so many years to unite the Hindus and Muslims in the common struggle for freedom, why does it appear to fail in recent years ? In the mass nationalist upsurge which began with 1935 and continued to rise upto 1940, the Muslim masses too were drawn into the common flood. But how did it happen that the awakened Muslim masses, especially, during the period of Congress Ministries rallied to the banner of the Muslim League which now became a powerful Muslim organization? Why did the Hindu-Muslim tension begin to rise during this period ? How did it happen that the breach between the Muslim masses and the national movement seemed to widen reaching its climax in the Pakistan Resolution passed by the Muslim League in March 1940 ? Also during this period, there has been a certain growth of Hindu Sabha influence inside the Congress. Unless we understand the peculiar nature of this accentuation of the communal problem and tension during the recent five years, we will not be able to see why the national leadership has failed to solve it, and why its failure has culminated in the bankruptcy which seeks to reverse the fundamental axiom of our national movement, viz., national unity for national freedom.

Why has there been an accentuation of the communal tension in the years that followed 1937 ? Apart from a general sharpening of Hindu-Muslim relations, there has been also a cropping-up of provincial jealousies and frictions, such as the Bengal-Bihar controversy, the question of a separate Andhra province and the question of "Samyukta" Karnatak and so on. The explanation is given that this is due to the competition between the bourgeoisie of these various communities and provinces for jobs and power which was brought to the surface by the new constitution. This is, of course, part of the truth. The cleavage brought about between the bourgeois sections of the various communities and provinces is only one aspect of the question. It is often stated that the masses have no communalism or provincialism. This is true in so far as the interests of the toiling masses all over the world and in the country are identical. But in actual practice, as the general national anti-imperialist upsurge spreads deeper into the masses, it finds

an echo in the growing up of sectional, communal, and provincial patriotism, which may not necessarily weaken or conflict with the larger national patriotism, but which is often used by the bourgeois leadership for accentuating national disunity.

The growing communal tension (Hindu-Muslim) as well as provincial jealousies and frictions which arose during the election period and in the period of the Congress Ministries were therefore a distorted expression of an otherwise healthy growth, viz., the masses of the individual nationalities awakening to all-India anti-imperialist national consciousness. Let us look at these two aspects more carefully.

Firstly, in spite of imperialist hindrances, bourgeois economic (industrial) development of our country is proceeding apace horizontally if not vertically. The level of industrialisation is spreading to every nook and corner of India. As a result there is a growing competition between the bourgeoisie of the different individual nationalities. The provincial autonomy under the new constitution tended to accentuate these frictions and we have in this period the Bengali-Behari, Marathi-Karnataki, Andhra-Tamilnad questions, the Hindu-Muslim question in Bengal, in the U. P. and in the Punjab, cropping up. This is one aspect of the question—the bourgeois aspect—the disruptive aspect, which imperialism and its agents use for their policy of divide and rule. This creates and mystifies the problem.

Secondly, we have the healthier aspect of the question. Side by side with the bourgeois development, the all-India national anti-imperialist movement is spreading to every nook and corner of India and bringing the peasant masses of the most backward nationalities and communities into its vortex. The All-India national movement for the country's emancipation is growing into a rich pattern of a multinational movement. The common goal of India's political and economic emancipation is being seen through the waking eyes of individual national consciousness. The Lingayat peasantry of Karnatak for instance, wakes up to anti-imperialist consciousness and develops a natural yearning for a free Karnatak in a free India. So it is with the Andhra, Tamils and with the Sindhis, Punjabis and Pathans. Here is the progressive aspect of the accentuation of the communal and provincial jealousies, which our growing national democratic movement itself brings to the surface. Herein lies the

key to the solution of the communal conflict in its new form which our national movement has to perceive and grasp as we shall presently show.

Here it will be asked : What has the Hindu-Muslim Problem to do with this cropping up of provincial jealousies on the one hand, and the awakening of individual national consciousness ? The Hindu-Muslim conflict arises out of the economic and other competition between the bourgeoisie or the upper class of the two communities while the imperialists are using the same to successfully divide the masses. If the Muslim masses are following the Muslim League in larger numbers, that has nothing to do with their growing nationalist sentiments either in the broad all-India sense or in the restricted sense of individual nationalities. It is just due to the spread of the influence of reactionary communalism among them, arising out of their political backwardness, and is due to nothing else. Such an analysis would not correspond to facts. It would mean that during 1936-42 when there was a general anti-imperialist mass upsurge, the Muslim masses remained unaffected by it and the hold upon them of the so-called pro-imperialist reactionary leadership of the Muslim League increased. The reality is that the Muslim masses too shared in the general anti-imperialist upsurge; but this expressed itself in the bulk of the Muslim petty-bourgeois masses going under the influence of the League. There was also a rise in the Muslim followers of the Congress but not as sharp and striking as in the case of the Muslim League. The growing anti-imperialist sentiment among the Muslims expressed itself in the pressure it exerted on the Muslim League leadership. In 1938 the Muslim League accepted the complete independence of India as its goal. The Muslim League leadership can be said to have undergone a transformation during this period. It is no longer feudal-reactionary, no longer just a willing tool of imperialism. It is now an industrial bourgeois leadership, which is no more just an adjunct of imperialism but one which plays an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism.

In fact, the Muslim League is to the Muslim petty-bourgeois mass what the Indian National Congress is to the Indian masses in general. This became quite clear in the imperialist phase of the war. The leadership of the Congress took to passive opposition to war and demanded recognition of complete independence and such present freedom which would give the Indian people effective power



in the government of the country immediately. The Muslim League leadership too adopted the attitude of passive non-co-operation with the war and demanded Pakistan, which is complete independence to such territorial units in which the Muslims predominate. Immediately, they demanded political equality with the Congress in any settlement at the Centre or effective power at the Centre for the League, in case the Congress refused to accept the settlement. To the Muslim masses, therefore, it appears that the Muslim League leadership is fighting not only for the complete independence of India from imperialist rule but also for freedom and equality to territorial units which are predominantly Muslim and for the protection of the rights of Muslim minorities in other provinces in relation to culture, education and language. Thus the rise of the Muslim League influence cannot be regarded as a reactionary phenomenon. On the other hand, it is the expression of the growing anti-imperialist upsurge among the Muslim masses, of the growth of the individual national consciousness of the Sindhis, of Punjabi Muslims, of the Pathans and so on within the framework of the broader all-India nationalism.

To be able to arrive at a correct solution of the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity which is to-day urgently demanded by the perilous national situation, two things must be grasped : the character of the Muslim League leadership and the basis of its mass influence. To see nothing in the problem but religious and cultural differences, to ascribe the deadlock in Congress-Muslim League relations to some irrational, obscurantist and fanatical element in the Muslims, which Mr. Jinnah is in a position to exploit for opportunist ends, because of the presence of the British Power, is not to understand the problem at all. In short, such an understanding leads to the bankrupt position that nothing could be done, no unity can be achieved until imperialist power disappears. But as soon as we realise that the leadership of the Muslim League is bourgeois in character and is playing an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism in a somewhat analogous way to the leadership of the Indian National Congress itself, as soon as we see the anti-imperialist base of the rise of the Muslim League influence, as soon as we grasp that behind the demand for Pakistan is the justified desire of the people of Muslim nationalities such as Sindhis, Baluchis, Punjabis (Muslims), Pathans to build their free national life within the

greater unity of the all-Indian national freedom, we at once see there is a very simple solution to the communal problem in its new phase. There is no reason to give up the sound slogan of national unity first to achieve freedom. If we grasp the recent developments in national policies correctly, we can at once see the basis for achieving national unity.

It is the historic task and responsibility of the Indian National Congress, which has achieved such a large measure of national unity thus far, for achieving national freedom, to take the next forward step towards unity, which the new phase of the communal problem demands, at this most critical turning point of our nation. In uniting the various sections of the people for national freedom, that freedom itself has to be defined in terms of a programme of democratic rights and liberties. The Indian National Congress has to a large extent succeeded in putting such a programme before the nation and has achieved on the basis of that programme a very large measure of national unity. But that programme is no longer sufficient to solve the communal problem in its present form and to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity. It certainly says that in a free India there will be freedom of worship for every one and that the religious and cultural rights of minorities would be guaranteed. It pledges itself to abolish all inequalities based on caste, creed and origin (such as untouchability etc.). But these declarations, essential as they are, for securing unity, are no longer enough.

The conception of India's unity was never a static one. It is a living and growing reality which is developing within its womb a host of individual nationalities which lived together on the Indian soil through centuries, and are now waking to new consciousness. Unequal economic development leads to friction and conflicts between communities and different national units. The growing sweep of the All-India people's movement tends to unite these communities and national units into one united national front for freedom. But imperialism deliberately promotes and fosters separatist tendencies to disrupt and paralyse the unity of national forces which is advancing towards freedom. The leadership of the National Congress instead of playing into the hands of the imperialist reactionaries by refusing to see the developing multi-national pattern of our national unity, has to recognise the just claim of the peoples of these individual nationalities to autonomous state existence within

the framework of a free Indian union, and their right to secession from the union, if they so desired. The National Congress, of course, dimly sees that the free India of the future would be a family of a number of nationalities, each having a territorial unit to which it is attached by historic tradition as its homeland, each having its own language, culture, common economic life, etc. The division of Congress Provinces linguistically reflects this realisation. In the resolution of the Working Committee on the rejection of the Cripps proposals, this idea was expressed more explicitly. The Congress came very near to recognising the right of self-determination of such national territorial units. But in the Allahabad A.I.C.C. there was a relapse again. Lala Jagat Narain's resolution was passed, by which the Congress virtually denied the right of self-determination to any nationality inasmuch as it refused to recognise the right of separation to any territorial unit. The result is that in the name of unity and indivisibility of India, separatist disruptionism of the communalists gains strength. The party that profits by it is that of the imperialist bureaucrats.

Thus the National Congress has so far failed to discharge its historic responsibility of coming forward as the unifier of the country on the basis of a programme guaranteeing self-determination, equality and freedom from oppression to every individual nationality in free India. The guaranteeing of autonomous state existence, with the right of political separation, to individual nationalities having their own territorial units to which they are bound by history, having a common language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up, can never lead to the vivisection of the motherland. On the other hand, by dispelling the distrust and suspicions which exist to-day among the people of the various nationalities, the Congress would be laying the foundation of a greater unity of action now and a greater unity of India visualised as a fraternal union of free nationalities, afterwards. Those who say recognition of the right of separation for individual nationalities would lead to the disintegration of the country, really lack faith in their own people. A clear-throated declaration of the type we have printed elsewhere, if made by the Congress will provide a real basis for Congress-League unity just because it clearly grants the rational kernel of the Pakistan demand. For according to it, nationalities such as Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans and Punjabi Muslims will have the right

to secede if they so desire. But it must be borne in mind that the recognition of the right of nationalities to separation, is the recognition of their equality and freedom from oppression in a free India. This would lay the basis not for separation but for joint fight for freedom against the aggressors and for the creation of an Indian Union based on voluntary co-operation of free nationalities.

By taking such a position, the National Congress would be building unity rather than encouraging separatist forces for it would be conceding straightaway what is just and right in the Pakistan demand. Wherever people of Muslim faith living together in a territorial unit, form a nationality in the sense defined above, they certainly have the right to autonomous state existence, just like the other nationalities in India, like the Andhras, Kannadis, Marathis, Bengalis etc. Wherever there are interspersed Muslim minorities within other autonomous states, their rights regarding culture, education and language would be guaranteed. Such a position would fully satisfy the demands of the awakened Muslim masses and guarantee them complete equality and freedom from oppression in a free India. If the Congress makes such a declaration, proclaims it as a part of its own programme of freedom, and calls upon the Muslim masses and the League to join with the Congress in a joint effort to win National Government, Jinnah's last argument against unity would have been knocked out. He will have to agree to unite. What would result then would be a period of the most gigantic joint effort of the Indian people for the defence of this country and for their freedom, under the leadership of their National Government. Out of this joint effort of the united people of India, no separate Pakistan and no Hindudom can ever rise but a happy family of free and autonomous states of various nationalities united in an Indian Union.

Where do we differ from Sjt Rajagopalachari's proposal for Congress-Muslim League unity for achieving National Government by conceding Pakistan as Jinnah demands it? Sjt C. Rajagopalachari turns to the Muslim League leadership and concedes to them their demand for Pakistan as a political expediency. By taking this position, Rajaji concedes the "two nations" theory of Jinnah and appears to nourish instead of laying the ghost of separatism. He, of course, does not mean it. But by the fact that he has chosen the diplomatic short-cut of just accepting Jinnah's Pakistan as a lesser

evil, he is taken by Congressmen as an advocate of separation rather than of higher unity. Rajaji being the first big Congress leader to have the boldness and the vision to go in wholeheartedly for Congress-League unity, evokes a lot of support among the Muslim masses. But just for that reason, he is looked upon by the bulk of the Congressmen as an advocate of separatism. The Gandhites and the Hindu Mahasabhaites attack him as such and condemn his bold and well-meant campaign for Congress-League unity as disruptionist. The weakness of Rajaji's position on Pakistan is that it is in the nature of a top settlement—which does not show to the bulk of Congress rank and file how justice to the Muslim masses is combined with the preservation and strengthening of Indian unity and integrity.

Our position on the other hand, is based on the just right of nationalities to equality and freedom within a free India, and therefore, concedes to the Muslims the essence of the Pakistan demand. On this basis, Jinnah cannot refuse to unite. Similarly, the bulk of Congressmen can be made to see in the proposals a bid for all-round unity and not a move for disintegration. To the Muslim masses, we would point out that the Congress stands for the freedom, equality and autonomous state existence of every nationality as defined above. Thus autonomous state existence of Muslim nationalities and rights of Muslims in other provinces regarding culture, language and education would be guaranteed. But the free India which guarantees you all that can only be won by a joint fight, through Congress-League unity. Hence get the League to unite with the Congress, on the basis of this general right of self-determination to all nationalities so that the nation may march towards freedom. To the Hindus, we would say : the Congress stands for unity and the territorial integrity of India. But this can be secured and India freed only on the basis of free and voluntary co-operation of the peoples of all nationalities and communities in common struggle. The freedom and unity of India can be won and preserved only by recognising the freedom and equality of the various nationalities of which India is composed. Hence, let us generously recognise this right and build a stable unity based on goodwill and mutual co-operation. Sound political instinct and patriotism led Rajaji to see the urgency and importance of Congress-League unity. The same

good qualities will lead him sooner or later to base his advocacy on the above principles.

Gandhiji says that the unity and indivisibility of India is an article of faith with him. How does he defend this article of faith of his ? How does he propose to fight Pakistan ? By ignoring the just demand that is behind it. By denying to the Muslim nationalities the right of autonomous state existence. This will lead only to further bitterness and conflict. How does Jinnah propose to fight for his Pakistan ? How does he propose to fight for Muslim independence ? By inculcating separatism among the Muslim masses and by driving the wedge firmer between the Congress and the League. This too only leads to further bitterness and further conflict.

Neither the path of Gandhiji nor that of Jinnah can lead the nation forward at this critical juncture. A brutal enemy threatens our land. The bureaucracy sits tight on top of our nation and holds the people down. Prevents them from putting up a total people's resistance which alone can save us from the fate of Burma. Our National leaders blamed the bureaucrats and sat quiet. Now as a result of the obduracy of the bureaucrats and of national frustration born of inactivity, they are proceeding to take the blind step of launching a non-violent "Struggle" to force the British Government to concede them that present freedom which would render successful people's resistance against the aggressor possible. The aim is sound but the path chosen does not lead to it but away from it. "Non-Violent Struggle" in the given situation is not a weapon of bringing the bureaucracy to its senses, but a wedge which divides our nation still further, which cuts us off from the support of the progressive forces of the world. This path leads the nation not to unity but to disruption, not to forcing the bureaucrats but to their strengthening vis-a-vis the nation. It is interests of the British and the Indian peoples which are being sacrificed while the Fascists smile on.

The calamity can yet be averted, if the Congress forges national unity, i. e., a Congress-League agreement by adopting, even at this eleventh hour, the declaration on Pakistan and Unity of India. National Unity is realisable on the basis of this declaration. It is the only path which will take our nation forward to freedom, in alliance with the freedom loving peoples of the world. There is no other way.

## DECLARATION ON PAKISTAN AND UNITY OF INDIA

*(To be adopted by the Indian National Congress)*

The Congress had been wedded to Indian freedom and any break in that unity whether in the present urgent situation or in the future when it would be needed more than ever for maintaining the gains of freedom, would be injurious to all concerned.

Nevertheless the Congress cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any individual nationality inhabiting a given territorial unit to which it is attached by historical tradition, having its own language, culture and psychological make-up and common economic life, to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will.

The Congress recognises that the people of every one of such individual nationalities which have lived together on the soil of India developing their own individual national life as well as a common fraternal bond with the broader unity through centuries, must have in free India the right of autonomous state existence on its own territory as an equal and free member of the future Indian Union or Federation accompanied by the unconditional right to political secession.

It must, however, be clearly understood that the territorial units thus visualised by on means coincide with the present provinces. In fact, the national territorial units based on individual Indian nationalities as defined above are today cut up by the artificially-created boundaries of states and provinces which hinder the healthy growth of individual nationalities as well as their common national union.

The rights of other interspersed minorities in the newlyformed autonomous states regarding their culture, language, education and schools will be guaranteed by statute. Similarly, all privileges and discriminations based on caste, race, and community will be abolished by statute.

If from among the autonomous states which will thus come into existence in a free India, one or several states having Muslim or any other faith, wish to secede from the Union in accordance with the freely expressed wish of the people of those states, they will of course, be free to do so. But it would be the constant endeavour

of the Congress to persuade the peoples of all Indian nationalities to remain in the united Indian union. to build on the secure basis of freedom from foreign rule, of democracy. of perfect equality of nationalities. of common interest and goodwill. a greater and more lasting unity of India than our history has ever seen.

## ON PAKISTAN & NATIONAL UNITY

*(Resolution passed by the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India on the 19th September 1942. and confirmed by the First Congress of the Communist Party of India in May. 1943 )*

All-in national unity based on communal harmony and congress-League joint front is today and urgent and pressing necessity to solve the present national crisis, to win National Government from the hands of the British imperialist bureaucracy and to defend our Motherland against the fascist aggressor. This has brought the controversy of Pakistan versus the unity of India sharply to the forefront. The Communist Party, therefore, lays down the main principles of the Communist policy on this issue.

1. The Communist party draws together the toilers of all castes. communities and nationalities in common class organisations ( Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas, etc.) It unites them politically as the vanguard of the United national front for achieving the freedom of our country and democracy. This is the cornerstone of the policy of achieving communal unity.

2. To build the united national front of the peoples of the various communities and nationalities that inhabit India, for the defence and freedom of our country. it is however necessary to dispel the mutual distrust and suspicion that exists among them. This is a remnant of memories of past historical oppression and of present social inequalities arising out of the feudal imperialist exploitation. For this purpose, the basic rights of the communities and nationalities must be made an essential part of the programme of the united national front.

3. The programme of the U.N.F must declare that in Free India, there will be perfect equality between nationalities and communities that live together in India. There will be no oppression of one nationality by another. There will be no inequalities of disabilities



based on caste or community. To ensure this the national movement must recognise the following rights as part of its programme for national unity.

(a) Every section of the Indian people which has a contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make-up and common economic life would be recognised as a distinct nationality with the right to exits as an autonomous state within the free Indian union or federation and will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are homelands of such nationalities and which today are split up by the artificial boundaries of the present British provinces and of the so-called "Indian States" would be re-united and restored to them in free India. Thus free India of tomorrow would be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as the pathans, Western Punjabis (dominantly Muslims). Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindustanis, Rajasthanis, Gujratis, Bengalis, Assamese, Beharis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Karnatakis, Maharashtrians, Keralas, etc.

(b) If there are interspersed minorities in the new states thus formed their rights regarding their culture, language, education, etc. would be guaranteed by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

(c) All disabilities, privileges and discriminations based on caste, race or community (such as untouchability and allied wrongs) would be abolished by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

4 Such a declaration of rights inasmuch as it concedes to every nationality as defined above, and therefore, to nationalities having Muslim faith, the right of autonomous state existence and of secession, can form the basis for unity between the national Congress and the League. For this would give to the Muslims wherever they are in an overwhelming majority in a contiguous territory which is their homeland, the right to form their autonomous states and even to separate if they so desire. In the case of the Bengali Muslims of the Eastern and Northern Districts of Bengal where they form an overwhelming majority, they may form themselves into an autonomous region—the state of Bengal or may form a separate state. Such a declaration therefore concedes the just essence of the Pakistan demand and has nothing in common with the separatist

theory of dividing India into two nations on the basis of religion. 5. But the recognition of the right of separation in this form need not necessarily lead to actual separation. On the other hand, by dispelling mutual suspicions, it brings about unity of action today and lays the basis for a greater unity in the free India of tomorrow. National unity forged on the basis of such a declaration and strengthened in the course of joint struggle in the defence of our motherland is bound to convince the peoples of all Indian nationalities of the urgent need to stick together and to form a free Indian Union or Federation in which each National State would be a free and equal member with right to secede, They will thus see this as the only path of protecting the freedom and democracy achieved and building, on that secure basis a greater and grander unity of India than our country has ever seen.

In spite of the apparent conflict and seemingly insoluble difficulties, the burning desire for unity is taking firmer hold of the people who today follow the Congress of the League. Under the stress of the growing menace of fascist invasion and of the present national crisis, the leadership of the two organisations also have moved closer together and in the direction of the very solution given in this resolution. There is no room whatsoever for defeatism on the question of unity. The Communist Party calls upon all patriots to join hands with it in popularising the principles laid down herein and thus speed up the realisation of Congress-League Unity, which is today the only path of national salvation for our Motherland in the hour of her gravest peril.

## **REPORT BY G. ADHIKARI**

*(On Resolution : "Pakistan and National Unity" Before the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India in September 1942.)*

### **I. Three Periods — Three Approaches**

The question of national unity, of Hindu-Muslim unity, has evolved and gone through different phases of development, side by side with, and as part of, the different phases through which our national movement itself has passed. The problem, therefore, has to be studied in a historical way if we are to understand it properly in its present phase.

Failure to study the problem in this historical-dynamical way leads to old ways of looking at it: old solutions continue to persist in our understanding long after they have become outmoded. Such tendencies, and such modes of thinking, which are really derived from a past phase of our national movement, and no more correspond to the present phase, have to be nailed down not only in terms of principle, but also on terms of historical evolution: otherwise, their sources cannot be properly grasped and they cannot be completely rooted out.

That is why a historical-political review is necessary here, a review of how the question of Hindu-Muslim unity has developed from the past to to-day. Only in this way can we understand the significance of Pakistan and of the demand for the self-determination of nationalities; only in this way can we understand exactly why these demands have arisen now at this time and not before?

If we look back and examine the evolution of the problem, we find three distinct approaches to the problem in three distinct periods, each one corresponding to a particular phase of our national movement.

In the first and earliest period, it was the fundamental axiom of the national movement (which was itself in its earliest period) that India is one nation. "the difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is only one of religion; the stronger the nationalist urge among the masses of both religions grows, the sooner this difference will go off, and Hindus and Muslims will grow together as one"—this is how the Liberals, who were the earliest nationalists, argued.

At this period, propaganda for unity on the basis of nationalism against imperialism, propaganda for social reform as a means of doing away with "religious backwardness" was considered an adequate solution of the problem. Such propaganda was carried on by the Liberals in the earliest period of the national movement and the Liberals at that period were the leaders of the incipient national movement. Their simple argument was: "What is needed to solve the problem is nationalist consciousness."

The second period which lasts upto about 1934, brings the further development of the nationalist movement, and with it a further development of the Hindu-Muslim problem too, side by side with and as an integral part of the former. In this period, the nationalist bourgeoisie grows, gets consolidated as the leader of the

nationalist movement, in place of the earlier loyalists and Liberal reformists. Alongside with this growth, we find, on the one hand, clashes and conflicts between the bourgeoisie of the two sections, on the other, side by side with this, as the other side of the very same process, the united class movement of the workers and the kisans grow up. Thus we have two simultaneous aspects: one—clashes and conflicts among the vested interests; the other—growing unity among the rising movement of the Kisans and the working class.

The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity was, therefore, posed by the Leftists in this period thus:

“The whole conflict between the two sections is confined to the bourgeoisie and the vested interests; the masses of either section have nothing to do with this conflict. Unite the masses of both sections on economic issues, on common struggles for economic demands; side by side, grant the Muslims their cultural rights—and the problem will be solved.”

The third period begins from about 1934, from the time of the advent of the New Constitution. In this period, two things take place simultaneously. On the one hand, the nationalist movement takes the biggest sweep forward and penetrates into the Indian countryside far and wide. On the other hand, with the developing offensive of Fascism on a world scale, with the sharpening of the war crisis and of the crisis of World Imperialism, the question of winning power from Imperialism comes to the forefront. The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, under the influence of these two factors, sharply comes on the agenda, but in a new form. At this time, the demand of the national movement no more becomes one for constitutional concessions, or for communal versus joint electorates, etc., but one for power. The war-crisis poses sharply before the Indian people the problem of winning power. It is at this time that the Muslim League comes out with its demand for a Separate State or States for Muslims. The grievances and demands of the Muslims as an “oppressed nationalities” are brought more and more into political controversies. The Hindu-Muslim problem appears in this new form now, the demand of the Muslims for their own State. With the outbreak of war, the Congress demands independence, the League demands Pakistan. The controversy of “Pakistan versus the Unity and Independence of India” begins.

It is in this period, as we shall see in detail subsequently, that the real nature of the communal problem becomes clear—as a problem of growing nationalities.

It is when we see the problem in such a historical-political perspective that we are able to distinguish three different approaches to the problem, corresponding to three different phases of our national movement. Thus only can we see how each of these three approaches arises from and fits, a particular phase of development of our national movement. We are able to understand the significance of the new development of the present period and the corresponding necessity for the working-class party to make a new approach to the problem, to suit this development.

Let us now take each of these periods separately and in detail.

## **II. The Evolution of The Communal Question**

The first period is the one in which our national movement is set the lowest phase of its development. The upper layers of the “intellectuals” and the professional middle class are alone in the movement and are its leaders. These Liberal intellectuals, who drank deep at the fountain of Victorian Liberalism, see in Britain an example for India to emulate. For them the ideal becomes : “India must unite and be a nation like Great Britain.” They do not see the specific differences between Great Britain and India, they do not see the different features that characterise Indian development. They see religious differences in India, they regard these differences as the only obstacle standing in the path of India's developing into a single nation just like Britain. Their propaganda, therefore, is for social reform in order to convince people that religion is an “irrelevant” issue as far as “politics” is concerned. The whole problem is looked upon as one of chucking out religion from politics. “Religion does not bother the British people, why should it bother us ?”—this is how they argue.

This is how the problem is seen by the narrow politics of the Liberals of those days, who see in British development the “Ideal” path of development for India too.

As the nationalist movement develops, two things emerge. The one is the rising imperialist challenge which says : “India is not even a nation, how can she govern herself ?” As against this, as an answer to this insolent challenge, the new nationalist movement

of 1906-18 asserts that India is nation, and, therefore, can govern herself

This assertion becomes the banner of the rising nationalist movement at this period. "We are a nation exactly as much as Great Britain is" so declares the nationalist of this period. The demands of the national movement at this period, correspondingly, are for the same parliamentary democratic Institution that Britain has, because "India is a nation as much as Britain is". The basis of the national movement at that time, as opposed to the imperialist challenge, is the assertion that India is a nation.

In this period, also with the rising nationalist movement, grow up certain prejudices, arising from the historical fact that the nationalist movement grew up among the educated Hindu middle-class first. It is these prejudices which, carried over into the further period, act as a hindrance to the development of national unity. The national movement at that time was dominantly Hindu in colour, it was led by the Hindu middle class leaders. The nationalism of that period, therefore, expressed itself in the garb of Hindu ideology. The idea that India is one nation thus became inextricably interwoven with ideas depicting the oneness of India in Hindu religious and cultural imagery.

Born thus, this religious imagery and these associations remain in popular consciousness long after that stage is passed. The dominance of Hindu leadership at this earliest period of the national movement, left a special Hindu cultural impress upon the nationalist movement. The idea that India is one became connected with the idea that the cultural unity of India is a Hindu cultural unity—an association that becomes a great drag and hindrance later on, as we shall see.

In 1920-21, the industrial bourgeoisie, consolidated and *strengthened during the war, begins to come to the forefront* of the nationalist movement. The question of Hindu-Muslim unity, which was till then purely one of joining together for "petitioning" the British Government (the Lucknow Pact of 1916) appears in the new

form *The Hindu and Muslim masses are stirred up by the post-war upsurge. It was a time when the Muslim masses were rising up. The Muslim countries of the Middle East were rising against British Imperialism, the dismemberment of the old Turkish Empire. British Imperialism stirs up Muslims throughout the world.*

The Khilafat movement was a reflection of this upsurge of the Muslim nationalities in the East. The Khilafat movement and the rising nationalist wave in India join hands. Both the sections—Hindus and Muslims—unite for struggle against British Imperialism. But even in this struggle, the issues are not yet clarified and sharpened. Though the struggle is a mass struggle, the basis of the demands is yet liberal, it is only the form that is revolutionary.

The whole question of unity is posed as unity on the basis of nationalist sentiment of asserting national freedom, against British Imperialism. The whole movement is yet restricted to the middle classes. The issues have not yet gone down to the masses. The demands are not clarified as their demands. On the part of Muslim masses, their participation in the struggle expresses the freedom urge of Muslim nationalities which was given a religious turn. The concrete democratic demands of the masses were not brought forward to unite the Hindu and Muslim masses in the struggle. It was a pure top agreement between the Khilafatists and the Svarajists, based on the demands of the top leaderships. The unity thus achieved has no solid foundation in the masses and therefore collapsed as soon as the struggle collapsed, as soon as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms came.

The collapse of this unity marks a definite watershed demarcating the period before from the one after. From this time on, we see on the one hand the slow, though thwarted and distorted, development of the industrial bourgeoisie, in conflict with imperialism and the conflict within its own ranks amongst its own different sections; on the other hand, the rising working-class movement, through which the Hindu and Muslim masses united together.

Under the impact of the characteristics of the period there was a strong tendency to look upon the communal problem as a mere middle-class problem of conflict between the two bourgeoisies. "only the workers can come together in common struggle. And the basis of this common struggle can only be economic"—so runs the argument. The communal problem was sought to be solved through the economic end.

The defect with this view point is not that it is completely wrong but that it represents only a partial aspect of the matter—that the solution to the problem of the conflict of the bourgeoisie is to be

found in the coming together of the masses of the proletarians and the semi-proletarians. This "class" explanation is put in a vulgar economic way—that the problem is merely one of middle class rivalry and the solution to it is common economic struggles of the masses. It is this outlook which made the Leftists put forward the "practical" solution of the communal problem—"Give cultural rights to the Muslims and the problem will be solved"—this "practical" solution amounted to the "practical" policy of the dominant section of the bourgeoisie itself.

The latter part of this second period, which followed the collapse of the glorious unity of 1920-22, was marked by bitter clash and conflict between the two sections of our people. The days of joint struggle were followed by days of tug-of-war in the Montford Councils. There was no effective joint front between the Congress and the League against the Simon Commission. Later in 1928 (December) when the All-Parties' Convention met to deliver India's counter-challenge to the imperialist challenge of Simon Commission and attempted to put forth an agreed constitution, it was a failure. The constitution was rejected by the Muslim League because the National Congress and the other parties, notably Hindu Sabha, refused to concede the League demand that the federation of free India should be such that the residual powers should not be vested in the Centre but in the federating units; thus ensuring them the largest measure of autonomy.

The result was that when the Congress started the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-32, the League did not join it. A section of Muslim leadership joined but the bulk of the Muslim masses were not drawn into the struggle as in 1920-22. The League itself disintegrated and continued to be weak during the years of 1924-36. At the Round Table conference too, there was no settlement between the Congress and the League.

The period of disunity was marked by the bloody trail of communal riots. These were engineered by goondas in the pay of the dark forces of reaction which wanted to take advantage of the disunity to destroy the militant national movement and the growing workers' and peasants' movement.

The weakening of the League during this period, which was due partly to the splitting away of a section of the patriotic Muslim leaders, and to the influx of opportunist feudal leaders, created the



illusion in the ranks of the National Congress that Hindu-Muslim unity could be achieved by crushing the League and by ensuring the protection of cultural and religious demands of the Muslims. The Leftists made this illusion into a theory : the Muslim League is a communal and reactionary organisation. When the Congress begins to fight for the economic demands of the masses and guarantees protection of cultural and religious demands of the Muslims, the Muslim masses will all leave the League and join the Congress and thus the communal problem will be solved.

The collapse of the second Civil Disobedience movement was followed by a new upsurge of the working class and kisan movement, a resurgence of the national movement. The developments which came in the wake of this upsurge, proved not only the bankruptcy of this disastrous theory but also shed light on the real nature of the communal problem and its solution.

The rise of the organised working-class and kisan movements, the sweeping political activity and upsurge that takes place all over the country preparatory to, and following upon, the Congress elections—these mark off the beginning of this period.

Three things happen now :

Firstly, the spurt of industrial development which followed the end of the first world war and which was mainly restricted to centres in advanced provinces now begins to spread to the other parts of the country. After the crisis and depression of the years 1926-32 capital from older centres of industry begins to flow and penetrate into backward regions and provinces. New industries like sugar and cement flower forth. The spread of industries to backward provinces, creation of new centres of industries in them brings in question of acute competition and rivalries between different sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. These get accentuated in the period of ministries under 1935 constitution.

Secondly, comes the fact that the nationalist movement penetrates into the countryside, it enters the kisan masses all over the land, at a rate and tempo never seen before. The masses of the working class and the peasantry, in the hitherto "advanced" as in the hitherto "backward" provinces, are swept into the current of the nationalist movement.

Thirdly, with the coming into operation of the New Constitution, the various political parties and bourgeois sections are called upon

to take up clear political positions vis-a-vis the question of power, the question of independence and democracy.

Let us take each of these features in turn :

For the first time during the time of the Congress elections of 1937 and during the period of the Congress ministries, we find interprovincial "jealousies" beginning to appear on the scene—frictions, competitions, etc., between different sections of the bourgeoisie, between the bourgeoisies of the different provinces, of different parts of India. Where industrial development spreads to provinces, which till then were relatively "backward", there arises competition between the bourgeoisie of these provinces and the bourgeoisie of the "advanced" provinces who are economically and politically more powerful.

The Karnataki-Maharashtrian rivalry and the demand of the Karnatakis for a "Samyukta Karnatak"; the Tamil-Andhra rivalries and the demand of the Andhras for a separate province; the demand of the Oriyas for their rights; the friction between the Bengalis and the Beharis—all these began to come to the fore.

So deep is this friction that it finds reflection inside the Congress organisation itself. In the Karnatak Congress, for instance, the factional dispute between Kannad Lingayat and Maharashtra Brahmins sharpened and assumed a very acute form during the elections of 1937 and after. This division reflected in fact the conflict between the Maharashtrian Brahmin (landlord) money lending group which had dominated the political and economic life of Karnatak till then, and the rising Kannad middle-class (merchants) and the bulk of the Kannad peasantry both of which belonged to the Lingayat community, and who had begun awakening to political consciousness especially after the second phase of national struggle of 1930-32.

But the basis behind all these conflicts and demands is much deeper than mere top rivalry between sections of the bourgeoisie. The conflict among the bourgeoisie is only one aspect of the matter. There is another aspect of it, an aspect formed by the second characteristic of this period mentioned in the foregoing.

Take the Karnatak example above. Behind it, in addition to the Maharashtra-Karnatak rivalry, was the fact that the Lingayat (Kannad) peasantry was, for the first time, roused to political life and entered the nationalist movement—and this peasantry with this

newly roused political consciousness, supported the Lingayat candidate as against the Maharashtrian candidate in the 1937 election. The same way, we find that in the Andhra-Tamil instance, in the Bengali-Behari instance, etc., among the newly political-awakened peasantry and masses of the people of Behar, Andhra etc., this movement for a separate province and rights, etc., finds eager response. Movements like the Samyukta Karnatak or, the one for a separate Andhra province etc., become deeply rooted in the masses of the peasantry and the people—and this at a time when the peasantry is being roused to—political consciousness by the spread of the national movement.

It is this latter aspect that assumes greater and greater importance during this period and gives a radically revolutionary turn to the whole problem of communal unity and national unity. And it is to this aspect that we have now to devote detailed attention.

As the national movement grows wider, the conflict between the top sections of the bourgeoisie begins to assume new forms. What are these new forms, what is their content? It is this which needs investigation, if one is to grasp the essence of the problem of national unity in this period.

### **A Problem of Growing Nationalities**

As the national movement spreads from the lower-middle class to the peasantry, the national question which till then was a simple question of conflict between the Indian people as a whole and British Imperialism, now becomes more complicated and takes on new forms. The broad frameworks of this fundamental conflict, of course, remains. But within this framework arise problems of various dormant nationalities for the first time waking up to life. problems that demand urgent solution as a preparatory step to the winning of Indian freedom from British Imperialism.

During the 1935-39 period, the national movement really becomes broader and sweeps over every nook and corner of the country hitherto left comparatively untouched. It goes deep down into the masses; the broad masses of the peasantry and the people for the first time wake up to active political and national consciousness. The peasantry in most provinces advance from their own narrow sectional consciousness to all-India consciousness but they make this advance to all-India consciousness in terms of their own newly-awakened national consciousness.

For example, taking the Karnatak example given above, the Lingayat peasantry really achieve all-India anti-imperialist consciousness, but they proceed to, and understand, this all-India consciousness through, in terms of, their own Kannad language and Kannad national consciousness. The idea of a free India for them becomes concrete as "Samyukta Karnatak"—a united and free Karnatak.

The Indian National Congress itself recognised this basic feature in the step it took of forming linguistic provinces

What happens, therefore, during this period is this? This national movement, led by the Congress, as it spreads over each province, takes on the national colour of that particular province. To put it in a picturesque though rough way, the all-India national movement resembles a stream which while it flows through the soil of each nationality naturally takes on the colour of the soil of that nationality. The stream becomes a multi-colour stream though it still remains one stream flowing in one direction.

The problem of achieving National Unity in this period becomes complex. It becomes a problem of achieving multi-national unity. In other words, in order to unite the entire people of India for the common task for achieving independence, the democracy, it becomes necessary to take into account the pride and love the different sections of the people have for their own language and their own homeland, to take into account their aspiration to build and live their own free life in their own homeland. To ignore this pride and love, this aspiration, of the various sections of our people, to brush them aside saying these are provincial prejudices or communal demands, is to ignore a growing reality. To ignore these sentiments is to repudiate the task of building National Unity.

These sentiments about a homeland and about language—these aspirations, are not reactionary. They are not, they need not be, in conflict with the sentiments of All-India National movement. On the other hand, the growth of these sentiments and aspirations of the people belonging to different nationalities has followed in the wake of the spread of the anti-imperialist consciousness among the masses. In actual fact, as we have seen, this takes place as the anti-imperialist, i.e., nationalist, movement spreads and penetrates deep into the peasant masses.

The peasant wakes up to general anti-imperialist consciousness—to the yearning for freedom and democracy for the whole of India. But this awakening takes the form of the yearning for freedom and democracy in terms of his own homeland, his own language, etc. Anti-imperialist consciousness awakens “national” consciousness—national in the specific sense of the nationalities that make up India. You cannot separate the one from the other.

Such a development takes place only when the anti-imperialist movement goes down to the peasant masses. That is why Stalin says “The national problem is dominantly a peasant problem.”

This close interlinking between the rising all-India political consciousness of the masses on the one hand and the waking up to life of a multi-national pattern on the other, each reacting on, and in its turn helping, the other—it is this which forms the progressive content of the rivalries and conflicts of this period. The other part of it, the husk, is of course manifested in competitions among the top bourgeoisie, such as the Bengal Behar competition, etc.

This shows the real maturity of the national movement, the real maturity of this multi-national consciousness. It is this same maturity which brings out into the forefront the fact that the problem is no more a mere problem of cultural separation and cultural freedom. The real basis is the full-throated urge of every nationality within this multi-national pattern for its fullest and freest development, free from all oppression and hindrances. The demand is for full and unfettered political and economic existence, as the only way of full and free development under the new conditions. The demand for freedom from British Imperialism gets crystallised in the case of each waking nationality. In this demand for full and unfettered political and economic existence, the former problem cannot be solved separate from, in opposition to the latter. It can only be solved through the latter.

This is the demand which we call the demand of every nationality for self-determination. This demand becomes the progressive lever by means of which alone the various nationalities can be rallied and mobilised to fight shoulder to shoulder, for India's freedom. This demand becomes the progressive lever for the richest and the highest flowering and development of every individual nationality.

itself Diversity becomes the lever for strengthening unity. for enriching and developing that very unity

To the Communists, this development is already becoming quite clear But to the ordinary patriot, this new aspect of the communal problem, as a problem of multi-national consciousness, has not yet become patent We, the Communists, are able to see our way into the future by means of our theory and our ideology By means of this, we are able to quickly see these elements in the present which are bound to develop in the future The slogans of our national movement should not be slogans which are counterposed to, which stand in the way of the stages of future development but should be such as will take us on along with the stream of future historical development and will assist such development

That is why we say that a basic understanding of this new turn in the development of the "communal problem", of this new phase is urgent and vital

The Party itself has been groping its way towards this new understanding for a long period Our resolution at Mantanavaripallam (1938) took the first step forward in this direction We were the only people at that time to see that Congress-League unity is the key to national unity We were the only people at that time to urge negotiations between the Congress and the League We were the only people at that time to see the transformation and change coming over the Muslim masses The C S P and other parties did not recognise any new turn in the situation, they still saw the problem in the old way—"the Muslim masses will come over to us and the League leadership will get isolated "

What are the developments in the Muslim League during this time? At the time of the Congress elections, a section of the Muslim intelligentsia came over to the Congress and supported it The radical election platform of the Congress was the main reason The League leadership, however, put its own house in order and consolidated its strength to fight the elections The League's opposition to the Muslim Congress candidates however was not very successful

But after the elections, the failure of the Congress to forge coalition ministries, the acts of commission and omission of the Congress ministries in some of the provinces, created a resentment

among the Muslim masses. This was seized upon by the League leadership to give an anti-Congress twist to the rising anti-imperialist upsurge among the Muslim masses, who were now rallying in evergrowing numbers round the Muslim League. The most radical section of the national leadership, was blind to the new developments sprcading among the Muslim masses. It saw in the growing League influence only the rise of "communalism". They explained that the "reac ionary" League leadership was exploiting the "backwardness" of the Muslim masses. As a solution they put forward the programme of "Muslim mass contact"—which was rightly considered by the Muslim Leaguers as a move to destroy their organisation.

We, Communists, saw in this development not only the growing rivalry between the bourgeoisie of both the sections but also the other, the progressive development too. We saw in the situation looking forward to the future not the "backwardness" of the Muslim masses, but their forwardness. their advancing political consciousness. We saw in the growth of the Muslim League not the growth of communalism but the rise of anti-imperialist nationalist consciousness among the Muslim masses. We saw this as a forward step. By bringing together the Congress and the League are joining them on common democratic demands, we knew that we could give a progressive expression to this upsurge of the Muslim masses and of the Muslim nationalities, we could weld this into firm anti-imperialist unity.

We put forward the slogan of Congress-League unity. We saw that the League leadership was playing the same oppositional role vis-a-vis British Imperialism as the Congress leadership was doing. We saw that the unity of both on the basis of a United National Front programme of democratic demands had to be forged to further Indian struggle for freedom. But we did not then discover the real democratic basis for Congress-League unity, for a lasting unity of Hindu and Muslim masses.

Congress was opposed to imperialist federation as the 1935 constitution offered. So was the Muslim League. But United Front to oppose the imperialist federation could be forged only when the two organisations agreed on the shape of the federation of independent India. The Congress conception of federation was defined in Nehru Constitution (in 1928) as one in which the residual powers were

vested in the Centre and not in the federating units. Muslim League had opposed this conception vigorously then. Their conception of the federation for free India was a federation of autonomous and sovereign states. Why? Because the Muslim League wanted autonomy for regions in which Muslim nationalities like Sindhis, Pathans, Punjabis, Eastern Bengal Muslims lived. It was a just democratic demand. This really is the crux and kernel of all the various so-called "communal" demands raised by the Muslim League right from its inception upto the present time when they have been finally crystallised into the demand for Pakistan.

In 1938 we did not understand the real nature of the communal problem which was becoming clear in the process of national, political and economic development. We were groping towards it. It became crystal clear to us when in March 1940, the Muslim League adopted the Pakistan Resolution. In 1938, we were yet wrapped up in the theory, like the rest of the nationalists, that India was one nation and that the Muslims were just a religious cultural minority and that Congress-League united front could be froged by conceding "protection of cultural and religious rights and demands." We stood on the same basis as the Congress leadership, and were guilty of the charge of denying the peoples of the Muslim nationalities their just right to autonomy in free India.

Since 1940 the party began to see that the so-called communal problem—especially Hindu-Muslim problem in India was really a problem of growing nationalities and that it could only be solved on the basis of the recognition of the right of self-determination, to the point of political secession, of the Muslim nationalities, as in fact of all nationalities which have India as their common motherland. In these days many comrades were shocked by the formulation that India was not one nation and its development was in the direction of a multi-national unity. Some of these doubts were cleared in the Party Letter of May, 1941.

### **Marxist-Leninist Teaching On The National Question**

From what has been said so far it is clear that the communal problem in India has entered a new phase. It is no more a problem of racial and religious differences. It is emerging as a problem of many nationalities that are growing in India. The question of uniting



the people of India in a single camp for achieving independence and democracy cannot be solved unless we take note of the just and the democratic aspirations of the peoples of these nationalities to build their own free life in a free India, unless these demands and aspirations find place in our platform for United National Front. For the solution of the communal problem in India therefore we must turn to the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the national question, to its Stalinist application to Russia.

Stalin has given a pithy but pregnant definition of a Nation :

“A nation is a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.”

But this definition must not be understood as a static enumeration of a number of features, the co-existence of which determines whether a given group of people are a nation or not. This definition in fact describes the process of a people growing into a nation. In order to apply Stalin's teaching to India we must understand this process of growth of nations and then apply that knowledge to our country.

A nation is not a static entity which has been in existence from time immemorial. Nations and national consciousness arise at a definite stage of social development. This is what Marxism-Leninism teaches us. This is how Comrade Stalin puts it—

“Modern nations are a product of a definite epoch of rising capitalism. The process of the abolition of feudalism and the development of capitalism was also the process of the development of peoples into nations. The British, the French, the Germans and the Italians formed into nations during the victorious march of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.”

There were feudal kingdoms and empires before the birth of capitalism. Some of them consisted of peoples speaking a single language, having the same culture. Others consisted of peoples of tribes speaking different languages and having different cultures. But these kingdoms and empires could not be called nations. Their transformation to nationhood, to national states, came about with the break-up of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. It came about when decentralised feudal economy based on village communities broke down, when its place was taken by commodity

economy, when capitalist market and manufacture of goods for this market began to unify whole areas under one common economy. Formation of such national states furthered capitalist development and capitalist development in its turn promoted the formation of national states.

The earliest and the most classic examples of the formation of peoples into nations are to be seen in the cases of Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany. In all these cases, the unification of people into a nation resulted in a homogeneous unit with a single language, and with common historical and cultural traditions. Our liberal forefathers of the last century admired the process of the unification of England, Scotland and Wales into a single nation Great Britain—which took place in the hey day of bourgeois revolution in the first half of the last century. They fondly imagined that the unification of the Indian people into a free national state would follow the same pattern. Since then this idea has become deeply rooted in the nationalist mind and is today the cause of a lot of confusion on the question of national unity.

But apart from this classic pattern of unification of peoples into nations, there is another pattern. During the second period of rising capitalism another type of national state arose in Eastern Europe. Here for historical reasons, a centralised state had already come into existence before the elimination of feudal disunity, before the rise of capitalism. “Mixed states made up of several nationalities which had not yet formed themselves into nations were already united into a common state”—this is how Stalin describe such a centralised state. The Austro-Hungarian empire and the Czarist empire were examples of such feudal centralised states.

With the development of capitalism these mixed states developed into “multi-national states with the more developed nation at the head and the remaining less developed nations in a state of political and economic subjection to the dominant nation” (Stalin). For instance in the pre-war Czarist empire it was the Great Russian nation, the bourgeoisie of which was powerful in the Czarist state which dominated and oppressed the less developed nationalities such as the Ukrainians, Georgians, Letts, Poles and Finns, etc. These nationalities too were developing towards nationhood but

their growth was being thwarted, giving rise to the national movement and the national problem in Russia.

The Russian movement which was heading the struggle for democracy and socialism had to tackle this problem. We have to learn a great deal from the manner in which the Russian Bolsheviks solved the question of uniting the people of different nationalities in a common struggle for democracy.

In Russian of the pre-revolutionary days, we have a classical example of what happens inside a multi-national state—as capitalist development spreads and national unrest grows up among the people of the suppressed nationalities. Rapid industrial development took place in Russia between the years 1908 and 1917.

The Great Russian bourgeoisie acquired hold over the markets and the raw materials of the border regions. Growth of market and trade in these border regions gave birth to the national bourgeoisie in these regions whose interest thus came into conflict with those of the dominant Russian bourgeoisie.

At the same time a vast popular democratic upsurge was beginning to spread from one end of the Czarist empire to another. People throughout Russia including the border regions were demanding the end of Czarist autocracy, the abolition of landlordism, a democratic republic and an 8-hour day.

In this situation, separatist movements arose in the border regions, led by the national bourgeoisie of those respective regions. These raised the slogan of independence and separation from the Czarist empire—and sought to take advantage of the democratic national sentiment that was growing among the people of the respective nationalities. But they refused to organise and unite the people of their nationality for their own democratic demands in common with the rest of the Russian people.

The result of such movements was in practice to disrupt the unity of the peoples of Russia as a whole against Czarism, to take the masses of the people of that nationality away from the common struggle, to divide the ranks of the working class and peasantry. The slogan of independence and separatism in the mouth of the national bourgeoisie of the border regions did not create conditions for the real liberation of the peoples of these regions from the

Czarist yoke but was for them a means of bargaining with the Great Russian bourgeoisie for a share of power

The political parties of the Great Russian bourgeoisie raised the slogan of "Russia one and indivisible" and played a lip sympathy to the democratic demands of the surging popular movement. Their "Russia one and indivisible" did not mean revolutionary unification of the democratic popular movement for the overthrow of Czarism. Their lip sympathy to democratisation did not include even complete political autonomy to the peoples of the border regions. In essence their policy amounted to imperialist domination of the Russian bourgeoisie over the economy of the whole of Russia including the border regions.

How did the Russian Bolsheviks go about to solve the problem of nationalities? The corner stone of their policy was the drawing together of the toiling people of all nationalities and races in a joint revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the Czarist autocracy and of the bourgeoisie. In uniting the people of entire Russia for the common struggle against Czarist-imperialist autocracy, the Bolsheviks clearly defined the common objective.

This was "a consistently democratic republican structure" — in which "the right of all the nations forming part of Russia to freely secede and form independent states" was to be recognised. Thus the two key slogans of the national policy of the Bolsheviks were

- (1) Unity of the workers and peasants, of the common people, for revolutionary struggle for democracy,
- (2) Recognition of the right of all nationalities to self-determination—to the point of secession.

The Bolsheviks were able to unite the overwhelming majority of the Russian peoples for the struggle against Czarism because they were the revolutionary party of the working class and thus proved themselves in practice the most implacable champions in the fight for democracy, for the abolition of landlordism, for a democratic republic, for the 8-hour day. They were able to smash the separatist moves of the bourgeoisie because they came out as the best Champions of the oppressed nationalities in their fight for equality and self-determination.

The policy which the Mensheviks, the reformist leadership in

the Russian labour movement, pursued, failed on both these points. In their struggle for democracy they relied upon the Russian bourgeoisie and not on the proletariat with the result that they capitulated at every stage to the former and betrayed the revolutionary struggle. Secondly, they refused to recognise the right of self-determination of the nationalities. They repeated the bourgeois slogan—Russia one and indivisible—and offered to the nationalities only cultural rights. Their policy in practice amounted to supporting the oppression of the people of the border regions by the dominant Great Russian nationality. Their policy thus played into the hands of the bourgeois separatists of the border nationalities and only led to disruption of the joint people's front against Czarism.

The Russian toiling masses rejected the policy of the Mensheviks and rallied round the slogans of the Bolsheviks. We see the result in the Soviet Union, a shining example for us of a model solution of the problem of nationalities in a country with some 200 nationalities.

### **Application To India**

Let us now apply these principles to the new phase of the communal problem in our country. To begin with it is quite clear that India was not a nation in the modern sense from times immemorial, from the days of Ashoka and Akbar. Nation building in India begins as in the case of all countries, with the advent of capitalism. This takes place in India with the British conquest. It is true that even before the British conquest, large feudal imperial states had come into existence which extended their sway over almost the whole of India. But these states did not develop into multi-national states as in the case of the Eastern European states. They had already disappeared before the advent of capitalism. The process of nation-building in India begins under the British state in India, under conditions of struggle against imperialist exploitation. What form does it take?

Our nineteenth and early twentieth century liberal forefathers thought that the British conquest had laid the basis for the unification of India into a single nation and that the process had begun. All what was needed was effort to speed up political education and social reform among the people. India would then become a full-

fledged single unified nation and be thus fit for self-government. In those days imperialists and their apologists based their denial of self-rule to India on the ground that India was not unified as a nation. While the liberals however, looked up to the imperialists to weld India into a nation, the militant nationalists of 1907-8 asserted that India was a nation, that she had been a nation since times immemorial—from the times of Ashoka and Akbar. This was their answer to the imperialist challenge.

They said self-rule was India's birth right, as a nation. 'India is a nation', this slogan became the banner of the rising tide of the patriotic middle class movement of those days. From the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, one people one nation, one language, one state. These became the slogans which inspired and unified the nationalist movement. Who said that India was not a single nation, that it could not have a single language that it could not build its own free state? Only the imperialists. Thus ran the nationalist argument. Since those days India, a single nation has become a tacitly accepted axiom of the nationalist movement.

Not only this. The nationalist movement of the early days was restricted to the advanced provinces of Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujerat—Hindu provinces with a common language, Hindi. The result was that the one nation idea got draped in Hindu cultural imagery with Hindi as the national language.

This one nation—one language idea, draped in Hindu imagery, has been carried over from the past into the consciousness of our modern nationalist movement. It persists even today at a time when the reality of our national development has become quite different: at a time when this development is taking the form more and more clearly of a multi-national pattern.

This conflict between an old and wrong conception still prevailing among the bulk of our nationalist movement and the unfolding reality of a multi-national development is one of the biggest hindrances to the solution of the communal problem. Marxist-Leninist teaching as applied to this reality enables us not only to understand it but to solve the problem as well. The proletariat armed with this advanced theory knows that within the womb of the Indian national movement now preparing the ground for a free and democratic India, are throbbing not one but many

baby nations. Comrade Stalin spoke of such a development as early as 1925:

“Who could have imagined that old Czarist Russia consisted of no less than fifty nationalities and ethnic groups? However, breaking old chains and bringing a number of forgotten peoples and nationalities on the scene, the October Revolution gave them new life and new development. Now-a-days India is spoken of as a single whole. Yet there can be hardly any doubt that in the case of a revolutionary upheaval in India many hitherto unknown nationalities each with its own language and its own distinctive culture will emerge on the scene.”

In 1925 when this was written, it was a brilliant prophecy, proving the remarkable acumen of vision that Marxism alone can give. Today when the whole world including India is on the threshold of a great upheaval this has become a growing reality. In spite of all the hindrances which imperialism places in the way of the normal development of India, in spite of the fact that the homeland areas of the different nationalities are cut up by arbitrary boundaries of states and provinces, these units are growing as nations economically and politically.

Each of these areas is now having its own Chamber of Commerce—for instance, Andhra, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab, etc. What does this show? It shows that the indigenous bourgeoisie in each area is attempting to consolidate its own market in its own homeland. Besides in each of these areas there is development of their own language, culture and literature. Not only this, in some of these areas where one nation has been cut up into different provinces, the demand for unification of the nation into a single province has been put forward as a democratic demand. As mentioned above, there is the demand for Samyukta Karnatak, for separation of Andhra, for united Maharashtra. The demand for Pakistan, if we look at its progressive essence, is in reality the demand for the self-determination and separation of the areas of Muslim nationalities of the Punjab, Pathans, Sind, Baluchistan and of the eastern provinces of Bengal.

It is this development which gives a new turn in this period to the communal and the national problem. The problem of communal and national unity thus becomes a problem of uniting all these

nationalities for the common task of defending the country against fascist aggression for winning freedom

### **Self-Determination And Separation**

The starting point of the solution of the communal problem put forward by our party is the urgent need for revolutionary unity of the peoples of our land to win national government and to defend the land from fascism. Our Party keeps in the forefront of our attention the fact that no nationality can have freedom and scope for free development until and unless all imperialist and feudal fetters are shattered, until and unless fascism is beaten back from the borders of our land and crushed.

We explain to the people two things:

(1) The problem of nationalities can only be solved in a firm and lasting manner under Socialism when the disuniting factor of the bourgeoisie disappears;

(2) But at the same time, a partial solution is possible under Capitalism, but only under conditions of complete and full democracy.

The solution which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.) put forward in 1917 was one of a radical democratic revolution, of attaining complete democracy.

This is what demarcates our policy, as a revolutionary policy, from the constitutional and administrative 'scheme making' in which Liberals and bourgeois-reformists indulge under the plea of solving the problem of Pakistan. To wander off into such constitution-mongering and boundary making pastimes is to stray from the revolutionary path into the path of reformism. The problem before us today is not one of drawing maps and boundaries, of trying to partition India off under British rule—but of forging the revolutionary unity of action, of all sections of our people to win national government, to win the common war of liberation against fascism and to secure the common freedom of all. This and this alone is the precondition to our people being able to remake boundaries in a democratic way, freed from all imperialist-feudal fetters.

This is what is stressed in para 1 of our Party's resolution on "Pakistan and National Unity". There we underline the point that the cornerstone of our policy is the unity of the masses as the vanguard of the national movement.



But developments have to be taken into account in their actual reality, not in abstraction. Hence the nationalities and their national urges have to be taken as they are : this should be the starting point. How can we unify these various nationalist strivings in terms of our all-India national struggle ? How can we give these various nationalist urges the dominant impress of all-India national consciousness ? This is the problem.

All the present and past historical forms of oppression of the masses of the various nationalities have to be concretely taken into account. The imminent danger threatening all our peoples from the fascist menace must be concretely stressed. Our national movement has to place before all our peoples a concrete, real picture of what it means to get rid of all this imperialist-feudal oppression and of what it means to win National Government and successfully crush the fascists. It is such a picture which should inspire them for united action today.

To bring together all the peoples, to bring together the urge of the various nationalities for freedom, on to a common platform, the platform of the United National Front—this is our task.

Our policy with respect to the communal problem fits into this general framework. The granting of the right of self-determination (including the right of secession) to all nationalities, including the Muslim nationalities, would forge revolutionary Hindu-Muslim unity as the core of national unity.

It must be clearly recognised, as has been pointed out in the foregoing, that uneven development under Imperialist rule has created a basis in our political life for inequality and the fear of domination as between various nationalities.

In our land, the dominant national oppression is, of course, the imperialist oppression. But inside the national movement itself, because of the unequal development of the various nationalities certain sections are more developed and more powerful, certain others less developed and weaker. This factor breeds mutual distrust and suspicion inside the national movement.

The Muslim masses fear that they will be oppressed and exploited by "Hindu India". Has this fear and suspicion any basis? To find an answer to this, we have to look not into the subjective intentions of parties and groups, but into objective developing reality. The

uneven bourgeois development itself creates conditions wherein one dominant nationality may be in a position to stifle the growth of less developed and weaker nationalities in a free India. We saw tiny germs of this even during the period of the Congress ministries. That is why we say that such a fear is quite an understandable fear

Conditions must be created so that this inequality and uneven development should be used not against the people, but in favour of the people. The inequality should not become a factor retarding unity against imperialism and fascist invasion. The bourgeoisie uses it for disunity. The proletariat, on the other hand (as in the case of the Soviet Union), uses the advanced technique of the forward nationalities to help the backward nationalities and to bring them up, quicker and more easily, to the level of the advance ones

Thus the demand for self-determination of the nationalities has to be looked upon as a just demand. The essence of this demand is equality and freedom from oppression. To refuse this demand means to sanction national inequality and oppression.

To the Congress patriot, who looks back upon our entire past national movement, and its achievements in unifying the Indian people, we have to explain that still greater and more glorious unity will result from the grant of self-determination to all nationalities. We have to explain to him how this policy creates revolutionary national unity today for national defence and national government, how the experience of common struggle in defending the country from the fascists will be the biggest cementing bond; how the removal of all causes of mutual distrust and suspicion alone will ensure the free and voluntary co-operation of all the nationalities in a free Indian Union; how the need for winning freedom, as well as the need to defend that freedom after it is won, will both act as a mighty unifying factor, once the fear of mutual domination is removed.

We have to put before him a picture of a multi-national India in which the problem of Indian unity is solved in a higher and more lasting manner. We have to show him, concretely that we Communists are not dividers, but unifiers; that our solution leads to a higher unity on a higher plane, a unity the like of which India has not seen in her history.

We have to explain to him how the National Congress itself in its resolution passed by the working committee at its Delhi session (March, 1942) did recognise a diversity inside India's unity and did declare that no territorial unit would be coerced into joining the Indian Union against its will. This together with Congress formation of provinces on a linguistic basis, national songs like Tagore's well-known song, etc., show that in the mind of the Congress patriot itself, the idea of a multi-national pattern in our land is not foreign.

Only by convincing the Congress patriot that the grant of self-determination really leads to unity, can we isolate the influence of the Hindu-minded communal reactionary, who under the garb of "Akhand Hindustan" fans the flames of distrust and hatred between the Hindus and Muslims and really supports national inequality and oppression? His slogan of "Akhand Hindustan" leads in fact not to unity but to disunity and disruption.

It was in March 1940, that the Muslim League put forward its slogan of Pakistan. The Congress had put forward non-co-operation as an oppositional weapon to extort power from Imperialism. In exactly the same way the Muslim League too, realising the anti-war and anti-imperialist sentiments of the Muslim masses put forward a parallel slogan to that of the Congress in order to share power, at the same time get the backing of the Muslim masses. The Congress declared: "If we are given independence, we shall support the war." The League declared: "If we are given Pakistan, we shall support the war."

But there was more in the slogan of Pakistan than this. And that is the fact that within the slogan was included, in a distorted form, the rising national urge of the Muslim nationalities which had awakened to life with the spreading of political consciousness during this period. It is to this urge of the Muslim nationalities that the slogan of Pakistan with its talk of "our homeland", etc., appealed.

That is why this slogan has gripped the minds of the Muslim masses so strongly and is doing so more and more strongly day after day. This is what explains the rapidly growing influence of the Muslim League among the Muslim masses.

Since 1940 till today, this influence has been rising steadily, the

popularity of the slogan of Pakistan among the Muslim masses has been rising steadily.

This is how the slogan of Pakistan has to be assessed. To forget that the democratic core within the Pakistan demand, the core which the Muslim masses really demand, is the right of Muslim nationalities to self-determination, is to remain blind to realities. Such blindness will lead us all to common disaster. It is this democratic core, which has a basis in actual life, which explains the rapidly growing influence of the Muslim League and of the Pakistan slogan among Muslim masses.

We have, therefore, to put our policy of self-determination to the Muslim peoples concretely in such a manner that appeals to their national consciousness. We must make real to them the patriotic national consciousness that binds each Muslim nationality to its homeland and that finds expression in its attachment to the Pakistan slogan. We must put before each Muslim nationalist a picture of free life in his homeland, in the land of his forefathers, among his fellow-nationalists.

This is the real need and urge of the Muslim masses to concede it will inspire and enthuse them for the common struggle, shoulder to shoulder with his Hindu brethren for National Government, defence and freedom. It is the only way of forging Hindu-Muslim unity to win Indian freedom first and afterwards to defend that freedom. It is the only way of weaning them away from separatist and disruptive slogans.

In this sense alone is the urge for Pakistan among the Muslim peoples real. In the religious sense, it is unreal. Only so long as their real democratic rights are not granted will they cling to Pakistan in the religious sense—in the hope that Pakistan will satisfy their national urge for self-determination.

The grant of self-determination to the Muslim nationalities has nothing to do with reactionary separatist theories like Pan-Islamism. The Pan-Islamic theory in fact played a prominent part in discussions in the Soviet Union too on the National question in the immediate post-war period. The Bolsheviks, of course, would have no truck with it; their policy of self-determination, in fact, removed the ground right from under the feet of the Pan-Islamists as of every other bourgeois-separatist group.

Pan-Islamism is in fact a weapon of disunity. By putting the slogan of "extra-territorial loyalty" in the forefront, it prevents national unity for the freedom struggle. It will not bring freedom to the Muslim peoples.

It is well to remember that Pan-Islamic propaganda has never taken root in India. From 1931 or 32 the idea of Pakistan has been there vaguely in the minds of sections of the Muslim intelligentsia. But it was never brought out till a decisive stage was reached—till 1940, when war is declared, the Congress demands a declaration of independence from the British Government. And at this time, the slogan of Pakistan rests upon the democratic urge among the newly-awakened Muslim nationalities for self-determination

It must be stressed very sharply that our Party's solution does not amount to: "Give the Muslim League leaders what they want. They want Pakistan. It is true that this is an evil, but compared to what will happen if we don't achieve communal unity, it is a lesser evil."

Such a solution is essentially a bourgeois-reformist solution, its roots is the conception of unity as a mere "top unity" between "leaders". This approach does not think of unity in terms of a developing peoples movement; it does not think in terms of uniting the Hindu and Muslim masses by granting a democratic demand that is just and that will unite them.

On the contrary, this approach is a bourgeois approach, which depends for unity purely on the subjective goodwill of individual leaders. Such an approach naturally leads only to defeatism and demoralisation—to cursing this or that leader as "impossible"!

The right of Muslim nationalities to self-determination is not a "lesser evil"; it is a just right. Our Party's solution is not :

"Give the League leaders what they want ; it does not matter if it means partition of India."

On the other hand, what we say is :

"Concede to the Muslim peoples their just democratic demands and thus lay the basis for unbreakable unity between the Hindu and Muslim masses, unity to achieve National Government, unity to defend our common land from the fascists."

The grant of the right of self-determination to all the nationalities of our land will in fact lead to a greater and more glorious unity of India than we have ever had till now. National unity that is forged on this basis will let loose such a flood of popular energy and initiative that our land has never seen since the glorious days of Congress-Khilafat unity. The Free India that will emerge as the result of this will be an India where all disruptive feudal-imperialist influence are destroyed, where the utmost democracy prevails, where the people have come into their own in every national state. Under such conditions, the interests of the people in every national state, that make up the Indian Union, are identical they have everything in common, nothing in conflict. They gain everything by sticking to each other; they only stand to lose by breaking away.

The denial of the right of self-determination means denial of equality and freedom to every nationality in a free India. It means supporting the domination of weaker nationalities by stronger ones. It means denying to our own peoples the freedom which all of us, in common, are demanding from the British—and to secure which, all of us have to fight in common.

It is the denial of the right of self-determination which will disunite and disrupt India. It will increase mutual distrust and suspicion, it will play into the hands of the separatists. It will keep our peoples divided, it will keep the Congress and the League divided, at a time when the price of such disunity is the death and destruction of all we hold dear in common.

Does it help the cause of India's unity, to keep up Congress-League disunity? Does it help the Cause of India's unity, to have Amery sit on our necks tighter, to lay our people helpless and prostrate before the Jap invader?

Does denial of the right of self-determination help us to go forward to a free India—without which all the “Unity” we shall have is the “unity of slavery?” Does coercion of any nationality into remaining inside the free Indian Union make the unity of that Indian Union firmer? Does it help us to defend our newly-won freedom better?

Every Congress patriot must see that it is the grant of the right

of self-determination that leads to the greater unity and freedom of the peoples of India. It is its denial which leads to the exact opposite.

The Soviet Union gives us a glorious example today of such unity achieved through the free and voluntary co-operation of equal nationalities.

To the Muslim patriot we declare

The granting of the right of self-determination recognises the patriotic national consciousness that binds each Muslim nationality to its homeland. It gives to every such nationality the freedom to take its destiny into its own hands and build up its own political and economic life in its homeland, in a free Indian Union. In a free India, the Pathan will have his own national state with the right to secede, the Punjabi Muslim will have his own national state with the right to secede, and so on.

This together with guarantee of the cultural rights of the Muslims in provinces where they form a minority will remove all possibility of national or communal oppression. It will assure the Muslims of India a free and equal place in the future Union of Free India.

This is what the Muslim peoples really want today. This is why they so enthusiastically support the Pakistan slogan of the Muslim League.

But today the Muslim peoples together with all their other brother peoples of India are under the same feudal-imperialist fetters, they are both menaced by the same fascist invader. Their freedom cannot be won separately from each other, the League can no more win self-determination for the Muslim peoples apart from the Congress than the Congress can win freedom for India apart from the League.

The Muslim peoples of India have to stand shoulder to shoulder with all their brother peoples, the League has to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Congress, to win National Government of National defence. Only through such united action can a free democratic India emerge and conditions be created in which all the peoples of India can enjoy their freedom.

And once the common freedom of all the Indian peoples has been won, the Muslim peoples will be able to defend their newly-won

freedom in their homeland best by free and voluntary co-operation with their brother-peoples of India in a free Indian union. In the free and voluntary co-operation of all the brother-peoples of India, Hindu and Muslim alike, lies best security for each. Those who won their freedom by standing shoulder to shoulder with each other can best defend that freedom also by standing shoulder to shoulder with each other.

That is why the interests of the Muslim peoples, today as in the future, lie in unity and close co-operation with their other brother-peoples of India. That is why the guarantee by the Congress of the right of self-determination of Muslim nationalities and the cultural rights of the Muslim minorities should mean for the Muslim peoples not separation from the rest of India, but a more glorious and more lasting unity within a free Indian Union, in which all Muslim and non-Muslim alike—are equal partners.

### **Concrete Solution.**

It now remains to concretise our solution to show how our policy is going to be applied to Muslim nationalities.

It is not our purpose here to attempt any detailed ethnographic surveys. This is neither politically necessary nor practically feasible. The idea is to attempt a rough concretisation of our policy so as to see (1) how closely our solution satisfies the democratic essence contained in the Pakistan demand, and (2) how far our solution offers a basis for negotiations between the Congress and the League for unity.

It is not a question of mechanically applying rigid pre-conceived notions to actual life, but one of genuinely looking for national urge and national consciousness wherever they exist in actual life.

Our solution should neither lead to hair-splitting ethnographic discussions on the one hand, nor should it be a mere fig-leaf to trick the Muslim peoples into unity!

Take Baluchistan. The Baluchis who are Muslims, speaking the Baluchi language, form 98-99% of the population of Baluchistan and the states of Kalat. They form a distinct nationality. So in the case of Baluchistan no difficulty arises.

Take the Pathans next. They are Muslims. They form more than



90% of the population of N.W.F. province. So strong is the urge among the Pathan nationality for self-determination that even though the N.W.F. Province is one of the strongest congress provinces, the Pathan delegation at the Allahabad A.I.C.C. (1942) would not vote against Rajaji's Resolution on Pakistan. To avoid being forced to vote against Rajaji's resolution, they absented themselves at the time of voting. They appreciated the stand of our party on self-determination.

The example of the Pathans clearly shows the correctness of our policy.

In the Punjab, the Muslims of Western Punjab (beyond the River Sutlej) bear the distinct impress of a nationality with a contiguous territory, language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up. These Western districts have a Muslim population of over 60% on an average, in many cases this percentage exceeds 70 or 80. But the question is not one of religion or of numerical preponderance. The dominant impress of the particular nationality is there on the life of this whole region.

This is why we grant the right of self-determination to this Muslim nationality of Western Punjab. The Sikhs and the Hindus in the Eastern districts of the Punjab can easily come to a settlement with Muslims of the Western districts on the basis of self-determination and guarantee of cultural rights. They can thus form a united autonomous Punjab, with the right to secede from the rest of India.

Take Sind next. The question here arises : Do the Sindhi Muslims form a nationality or do the Sindhis as a whole form a nationality ? This question, of course, has to be answered not by a priori arguments, but by actually examining the life and consciousness of the people in Sind itself. And judged by this criterion, I think that the Sindhis as a whole form a distinct nationality. Granting the Sindhis the right of self-determination would of course, satisfy the national aspirations of the Sindhi Muslims who form part of the Sindhi nationality.

Ticklish questions which may be raised in this connection such as : "When a plebiscite comes up to decide the issue of separation, do the Sindhis as a whole vote or do only the Sindhi Muslims vote,"

have to be settled by negotiation. Our Party's stand, of course, is that the entire people belonging to the nationality will decide the issue of separation. But the main point here is that the grant of self-determination to the Sindhis is enough to settle the problem of unity and untied struggle today: it is enough to serve as a basis for negotiations between the Congress and the League.

Then comes the question of Bengal. Firstly, the Bengalis form a distinct nationality and so should be given the right of self-determination. There is much more in common between the Bengali Hindu and the Bengali Muslim than between the Bengali Muslim and say, the Pathan.

But in this case over and above this fact, Eastern Bengal forms a special problem. Here generally speaking there is a Muslim population of more than 60%. Within the framework of a common nationality, the Muslim peasantry of Eastern Bengal has a distinct cultural complex of its own which has made its impress on Eastern Bengal as a separate entity. We have to recognise this. In the case of nationalities too, there are such things as transitional forms, and we have to recognise in Eastern Bengal precisely such a transitional stage of development.

The crux of the matter is:

How best can we unite the oppressed peasantry of Eastern Bengal for the common struggle, recognising their special position ?

The solution put forward in our Party resolution, on the one hand, enables the peasantry of East Bengal to share and enrich the common national heritage of Bengal; on the other hand, it enables us to unite them and to convince them that they would be better off if they remained within the Bengali state. It satisfies their urge and by this very means, paves the way for their remaining inside the Bengali state. Such a solution alone will enable us to isolate the separatists and pave the way for a political revolutionary unity of the Bengali people.

The Muslims in the other provinces (including Eastern Punjab) form interspersed minorities. Their cultural rights will be guaranteed. It is these very rights (Question of education, text-books, etc., in the Urdu Language and such other demands) that formed the bone of contention between the Congress and the League during the

Congress Ministry period in the U.P. The U.P. example already showed that in such cases the demands of the minorities no more rested on hazy religious ground, but had already been shifted to the modern political plane. That is why the guarantee of cultural rights etc., is sufficient in these cases.

The question of the other nationalities cannot be dealt with in minute detail here. The general principles however are clear and are laid down in the party resolution.

One more point. Does all this really correspond to the essence of the demand of the Muslim League ? It surely does. The famous Lahore resolution of the Muslim League states the following basic principle of its Pakistan demand .

“That geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute “Independent State” in which the constituent units ; shall be autonomous and sovereign”.

Our solution concedes to the “constituent units” of the Zones specified in this resolution—namely to sind N.W.F. Province, Punjab and Eastern districts of Bengal, the right of self-determination to the point of secession. This means these states whose exact boundaries could be determined by the people later, can be autonomous and sovereign and form the federation within an Indian Union or they may secede and form their federation without.

The National Congress must recognise this right of these Muslim nationalities as of the other nationalities of which India is composed. Why ? Because free India must be based on the principles of equality of the various nationalities. That alone would guarantee a united India—a voluntary federation of autonomous national states. Muslim peoples and their leaders are not bent upon separation. Grant them the right of equality and you create the basis for national unity today, and for the greater and more glorious unity of India tomorrow.

It is necessary in closing to stress once again a point which is

really the crux of communist policy. That is, the question of the self-determination of nationalities is to be looked upon as a political-revolutionary question, not a constitutional question.

It is the constitutional reformist who begins with the question: whether to separate or not. We look upon the right of self-determination as the hallmark of sovereignty and of equality. The grant of this right, including the right of separation dispels distrust and acts as the strongest unifying bond here and now. The object is to unite, not to partition off.

In our practical application of our policy, the way in which we demarcate the nationalities is judged by : How shall we define the nationalities in such a way as to create conditions where there will be the fullest and freest flowering and development of national characteristics ?

It follows from the above that the question of when, whether how (ect.) to separate, cannot and must not be decided today. The grant of the right of separation should not be confused with the actual exercise of this right, it should not be confused with the actual expediency of the exercise of this right in this or that particular case. This latter question can only be decided in any particular case at any particular time in terms of whole social development. Every case would be concretely judged on the basis of whether separation serves the interests of social and political development taken as a whole.

Unite all the nationalities for freedom, for national defence—this is our fundamental aim. Do we get a weapon in our hands in order to unite the Hindu and Muslim masses here and now and isolate the separatists? Do we define nationalities in such a manner that in a federated democratic India every nationality will be able to develop fully and freely? —These are the fundamental criteria of the practical application of our policy.

The entire destiny of our nation today depends on national unity, on Congress-League unity. Whether we win National Government and go forward to a free India—or whether we pass helplessly into the arms of the Japs; this is the issue. No longer can the solution of the problem of Congress-League unity be delayed. And there is no other way of forging such unity except by conceding the right

of self-determination to all the nationalities of India, including the Muslim nationalities.

## WORK FOR CONGRESS-LEAGUE AGREEMENT

*(Manifesto of the Communist Party of  
India for Unity Week, November 1-7, 1942)*

The Communist Party of India, in this solemn hour of our country's destiny, reminds all fellow-fighters for freedom of the glorious heritage of 1920-21. of Hindu-Muslim unity, when in the fire of common experience, through common sufferings. in the common cause of freedom we learnt that our united might is invincible.

Who will dare stand in the way of Indian freedom when the masses of our two great communities stand united, when the great organisations of the Congress and the Muslim League join in a united front on a common programme of defending the existence of our ancient nation and winning its freedom?

This simple truth we can ignore only at our peril. The sooner we own it the faster we will reassume our national responsibility, and go forward to discharge our patriotic duty.

The Japanese Fascists are pitiless and powerful enemies. In the holy defence of our Motherland, we shall have to mobilise every able-bodied son of our great people, give him a rifle and a stout heart. We need the all embracing unity of our people and boundless courage in every breast.

Can an alien bureaucracy create such a front of unity ? No ! Its very existence depends upon our disunity; its only strength is our division; its way is to keep us divided, play brother against brother.

Can an alien bureaucracy inspire such courage in our people! No, NEVER! It only knows how to suppress our people. It hates the patriot-heroes as enemies. It encourages the careerists who love themselves and not their people, who would serve it and forsake the people.

Can an alien bureaucracy command the patriotism of the people and lead them into the battle of India? NEVER, NEVER, NEVER!

Its relation with our people is that of master and slave. Under the banner of patriotism, our awakened people have fought it for elementary rights and to be masters in our own country. It cannot talk in the name of patriotism. It only knows how to crush our patriotism. It cannot mobilise our people. It only knows how to drive them about like cattle.

All self-respecting Indians, except the craven and the contemptible few, recognise that India needs here and now a Provisional National Government, manned by the trusted leaders of India, of the National Congress, and the Muslim League and of the other patriotic parties. All see that such, and such a Government alone can set aglow in each of the 400 million hearts of the Indian people, the fire of patriotism, which alone will make a total national resistance to the foreign invader possible.

Hindus and Muslims can never unite! Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb will not even sit in the same room! Thus whisper the evil tongues of the alien bureaucrats, the enemies of our people. Thus speak those who arrested Gandhiji and the Congress leaders. They do so because they do not want to see them united. They know that the unity of the Congress and the League will be the end of their privileged rule, of a handful of foreign bureaucrats lording it over our vast country, of a soulless and thoughtless regime which today has become the millstone round the neck of our people.

We can and must unite. Only liars and defeatists amongst us repeat the phrases of the enemy and say Congress-League unity is impossible. Do not the Muslim masses want Gandhiji and the Congress leaders released? They do! Do not the overwhelming majority of Congressmen and Hindus what to live peacefully with their Muslim brethren, grant their just demands and get their co-operation for the common national demand? Certainly they do!

Instead of national unity we are in the grip of a national crisis. On the one hand the imperialist rulers refusing to part with power are attacking the national movement embodied in the Congress. On the other, enraged patriots are destroying the means of national defence in the name of national freedom. In this clash and conflict, the country is going to pieces.

The very experience of the national crisis is turning the face of our people towards national unity as the only way out of the crisis and towards victory.

More and more people, both Hindus and Muslims, participants, and non-participants are beginning to see that the campaign of sabotage and anarchy helps only the bureaucracy to mow us down, helps only the foreign invader by clearing the path for his advance.

More and more they see that continued Government repression only feeds the fire that is destroying the nation's strength, the people's morale and the actual means of defence, that only the coming invader can profit thereby

More and more they have begun to see that the only way out of this vicious circle is Congress-League agreement to man an All-Parties' National Government of National Defence and National Salvation.

Such an agreement incorporating the united will of the Indian people to shoulder the responsibility of defending their country, in alliance with the United Nations, through their own Government is itself the mightiest sanction which the Indian people have ever forged. It will force the imperialist rules to bend before the united will of the Indian nation and hand over our country to us, to be defended by us as our own.

Such an agreement will immensely strengthen the hands of the progressive sections of the peoples of the United Nations, and above all, inside Britain itself, who want the co-operation of the Indian people in the war against the Fascist aggressors and advocate settlement with Indian patriotic political parties

Such an agreement will completely encircle the handful of imperialist reactionaries, who in their blind greed to hold on to our beloved Motherland as their coveted colony, are actually playing with the fate of our people as well as their own. Such an agreement will seal their doom, end the era of British Raj over India and usher in the period of Indian Swaraj and of brotherly alliance between the Indian and the British people as equal partners in the grand alliance of the freedom-loving United Nations.

How to get Congress-League Agreement? The Congress leaders are in jail, the Congress is under ban and the League

leadership is not taking the initiative. The people need national unity as they do bread and water. Our fate and future depends upon it. Without unity, there is no alternative to blind destruction today as there will be none to catastrophe and death when the Fascist invasion begins. This grim realisation must inspire our patriotic will for unity.

Where there is a will, there is a way. The people can and must find it. The leaders can be made to move and they will respond if those who are already fanatically convinced about the immediate need and urgency for unity begin rallying the people in ever larger numbers behind the slogan of Congress-League Unity.

Difficulties can and must be surmounted. They pale into nothingness before the need for unity.

For centuries we have lived together in this common Motherland of ours. We have enriched each other's culture, language and the arts. Now we are faced with a common peril, total destruction of all that we hold dear at the hands of the Fascist aggressor. The bureaucracy won't let us man our own defence and have our own Government which will have the confidence of our entire people. Must we not get together for our very existence ?

Defence of the Motherland—is it not our common concern ?

National Government of National Salvation—is that not our common need and immediate aim ?

Must we not unitedly force back the imperialist bureaucracy and take our destiny in our own hands.

Is it not in our joint interests that our country takes its place alongside world democracy and the Islamic world ?

And when we both want to fight for a free India, can we not agree what that free India would be like? All already agree that it won't be freedom if it did not ensure that no nationality or community could oppress another.

The two organisations which together command the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the Hindu and Muslim masses have moved towards each other, very nearly towards a common understanding. The League in its Bombay Working Committee meeting has tried to allay the Congress fear that it is not serious about the national demand by reiterating the goal of complete



independence and supporting the demand of really responsible National Government if the Muslim demand is guaranteed. The Congress in its Bombay A.I.C.C. resolution has tried to allay Muslim fears by pledging complete autonomy to the federating units and residuary powers.

The logical culmination of this mutual reorientation, of the League thinking and acting more and more in common national terms, of the Congress becoming in word and practice, more and more considerate to Muslim fears and interests, can only be a Congress-League agreement. There is no other way out for either organisation, in their own and common interests. Speed up the process, this is the call of common patriotism.

The position of the Communist Party is clear and emphatic. We declare that in a freed India, all nationalities, Muslims or otherwise, having a contiguous territory as their homeland, common language, culture, common economic life and psychological make-up must have the right to form sovereign states which will come together in a joint Indian Federation or Union. Each unit must have the right to secede if it so desired.

Our stand has been welcomed by the Muslim Leaguers but the latter hold back because they doubt if the Congress will accept it. Most of the Congressmen are prepared to come up to autonomous provinces with a sovereign status, but they are not prepared to go so far as we do because they do not yet trust the Muslim League.

We are confident, an abiding solution of the communal problem, achievement of Congress-League agreement is possible only on the basis we advocate. Our solution is based on justice, the same undying principle on which the battle of Indian freedom is based—of self-determination. The freedom we claim for our country as a whole must be extended to all the nationalities that inhabit our vast land. The edifice of a free India can only be built on the basis of people's consent and not through coercion of the weak or the backward. We have no doubt that a free India will also be a United India, the Hindu and Muslim masses having fought together the greatest common battle will not fall apart in the hour of victory but get ever closer together to build a common destiny grander than we have ever known before.

Our ardent appeal to the Muslim Leaguers is: your right of self-determination will remain on paper if you do not intervene in the national crisis. Hindu, Muslims and all will pass from under British domination to Jap slavery if you let the situation drift. The harder you work for the release of the Congress leaders, the more unequivocal your support to the national demand, the more ardently you work for Congress-League agreement, the easier it will be to get the Congress to accept willingly and enthusiastically the right of self-determination. The Congress is in jail, you are free. You discharge your patriotic responsibility and none will be able to deny you your just right.

Our appeal to Congressmen is; destruction of national defence and anarchy against the people, is not the path to National Government but national suicide. The shortest cut to National Government is Congress-League agreement. Appeal to the patriotism of the Muslim brethren concede their just demand for self-determination and such a mighty United National Front of the Indian battle will emerge which will sweep everything before it, the british bossdom of the present will become a nightmare of the past, and our 400 millions will stand arrayed in an unbreakable front for Indian freedom, for world humanity. Let us have faith in our own brother patriots, confidence in the sound instincts of our own people. Congress-League agreement comes the sooner, the harder you work for it. This time the move for unity cannot fail it is the existence of all that is at stake. Through disunity common death or through unity common salvation. These alone are the alternatives.

*The Communist Party of India appeals to Leaguers, Congressmen and to all to join hands with it for a mass unity campaign to bring together the Hindu and Muslim masses for urgent and common demands :*

—STOP REPRESSION

—RELEASE THE CONGRESS LEADERS

—CONGRESS-LEAGUE AGREEMENT NOW

—FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

To work for Congress-League unity is to put our patriotism into practice. To hold back and find fault with the Congress or the League is to nurse a grudge against your own brother, indulge in phrase-mongering when the situation is too grave for words, do nothing to rescue the country from the mad hands of the imperialist bureaucrats, and do nothing to resist the Fascist aggressors.

The Communist Party of India is pledged to campaign for Congress-League agreement

—in every village and tehsil

—in every town and city

—inside every college and office

Wherever a Communist lives and works

FORWARD TO UNITY  
ONWARD TO VICTORY

## ENGLAND-WIDE DEMONSTRATIONS FOR INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

About forty meetings and demonstrations have been arranged throughout the country to celebrate the "INDIA WEEK" which begins on the 24th. A large number of Labour and Liberal M. Ps, Trade Union leaders, progressive artists and writers, and prominent Indians resident in England are participating and addressing the meetings.

Meetings and conference are arranged in *Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, Bristol, Harrow and Birmingham*. Among speakers at these meetings are P.G. Bar-tow, M.P., Commander Edger Young, W. Dobbie, M. P. Reginald Bridgeman, Councillor. Krishna Menon, Dr. Data, Dr. K.S. Shelvankar, and Miss Batliwala.

### **In Amery's Constituency India Week Meeting !**

There will be a meeting at SPARBROOKE, Mr. Amery's constituency on the 25th which will be addressed by Reginald Sorensen, M.P., Palme Dutt, Dr. Prem, and the local Labour leaders and Parliamentary candidates.

*London will have a meeting on the Twenty-sixth in Holborn Hall under the chairmanship of S. Saed Mohamedi, which will be addressed by H. N. Brailsford, Ted Bramley, Lord Faringdon, Prof. Herman Levy and Edward Thompson. India's Independence Pledge will be read at this meeting.*

On the thirty-first, there will be a demonstration in Coliseum Hall, London, under the chairmanship of Earl Huntingdon, when Mrs. Corbett Ashby, (Liberal), Harry Adams, President, Building Workers' Union, H. O. Davies, a leader of the South Wales'

Miners, Reginald Gosling, a Cooperator, and Prof. J. B. S. Haldane will address the gathering. Apart from Indian songs there will be negro spiritual songs by Robert Adams while Rudolph Dunbar will conduct the orchestra. Both these are leading Negro artists and progressive. Leading figures of the stage such as. Dam Sybil Thorndyke, Walter Hudd. Jean Forbes-Robertson are also participating in the demonstration.

The Institute for Oriental Studies of the Moscow Academy of Sciences is preparing a symposium on India by various authors, which is to be shortly published, reported Moscow Radio on January 13th.

R. Palme Dutt writing in "Daily Worker" calls for support to the India Week and says "there is no time to loose; Indian Independence must be forthwith recognised. Practical assistance to enable the Indian people to enjoy freedom and fight as free allies of the United Nations would be more of worth "to the cause of the United Nations than tons of speeches singing the glory of the Empire." He described the grave food situation in India and called for help.

### **French Communist Party Deputy in London**

Ferdinand Grennier, the French Communist Deputy who has arrived here on behalf of the Central Committee of the C. P. of France to declare the Party's adhesion to the National Committee of De Gaulle said : "There is neither Left nor Right in politics to-day. You are either pro-Hitler and pro-Vichy or anti-Hitler and anti-Vichy and a whole-hearted supporter of De Gaulle."

Maurice Thorez, the General Secretary of C. P. of France, who is at present underground in France, in a special message speaks highly of Grennier and says that in France he stood steadfast at his fighting post.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY CALL TO ALL PATRIOTS

*Manifesto of the Central Committee of the  
Communist Party of India, January, 26. 1943*

**Wipe out the infamy of Disunity !  
Pledge to back the Deadlock !**

*Independence day* this year falls in the midst of the biggest disaster that has overtaken our country. Bengal, the cradle of our National Movement, has become one vast graveyard. Families have been wiped out. Entire regions have been de-populated, whole villages made desolate.

Five millions of our countrymen have perished because we, their compatriots, could not refuse the food for them from the hands of the profiteers: because the hoarders withheld it, because bureaucracy was too incompetent to procure it.

We were not able to unite our people to rescue these five millions from death, when they could have been rescued; we were not able to move the vast mass of Muslims when Gandhiji was dying inch by inch last year. Our failure to unite nearly cost us the Mahatma's life; our failure to unite has already cost us five million innocent lives in Bengal.

When we think of this fellow-Congressmen, all of us have to hang down our heads in shame.

National disunity has meant millions of deaths; it has meant destitution and famine all round. It is to-day the only passport of the present regime to rule over our land as it likes. A regime condemned by world opinion, a regime which had started tottering long before the war, rides rough-shod over us just because it is not confronted by a united front of our national forces.

Encouraged by disunity in its arrogant denial of power, the bureaucracy imprisoned the national leaders and unleashed the worst famine in the history of the country. It refused to release them

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*Taken from : "Communism in India" Unpublished documents  
1935-1945 Edited by Subodh Roy, pages 393-397.*

even when their release alone would have saved millions of lives in Bengal. It refused to release the Mahatma despite world opinion. It repressed the Congress and insults the League. It has denied power to both. Deadlock has been its one watchword: keeping the jail gates shut has been its strategy.

### **Outpost of Slavery**

Completely isolated from the people, realising its weaknesses before any united demand, it desperately clings to deadlock, to retention of Congress leaders in jail, as the only chance of preventing our march to National Government and Freedom.

It pretends to solve the food-crisis without a political settlement: it only accentuates it and unleashes a new war of epidemics, threatening to ruin the whole country. its policy saps the morale for defence and production and threatens to blow up the entire country.

In short, every day of deadlock means destitution, death, hunger, famine and threat of invasion to our people: deadlock constitutes the last outpost of slavery, maintained only because of disunity in the nation's ranks.

There is no marching forward for our country unless the policy of deadlock, the policy of retaining the Congress leaders in jail is defeated; unless the leaders are released to unite our people for food and national defence.

### **Self -Determination means Unity.**

Independence Day calls upon every honest man to work for uniting our people to secure the release of leaders and defeat the bureaucracy. It calls upon every Congressman to work steadily to secure overwhelming Muslim support for the release of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, it bids him to inspire confidence among the Muslims that the release of leaders will lead to unity and full acceptance of their right of self-determination.

Every Muslim voice raised in favour of release of national leaders is a big blow against the bureaucracy and for freedom and power. Every Congress voice raised for self-determination to Muslim

nationalities hastens national Unity, and the defeat of the present regime.

Any other path is the path of famine, of deaths, of starvation, of succumbing to bureaucratic provocation, of rendering the country helpless before Japanese invasion.

### **Whither Fellow-Congressmen?**

And yet a few well-meaning and honest Congressmen in their utter despair, are once more advocating the suicidal path of satyagraha and no-tax campaign, in the name of keeping struggle.

They turn their backs on the task of building national unity, they turn their backs upon defence against Jap invasion. they turn their eyes from the grim food situation and the massacre of thousands: they have no plan of saving people's food from the hands of the hoarder and of protecting them from the consequences of bureaucratic bungling. They do not advocate united action of Hindus and Muslims even to save our people from hunger. Despairing of unity, they advocate satyagraha and no-tax.

In the earlier years satyagraha united our people against the bureaucracy and strengthened our striking power.

In the present situation, where does it lead?

Does it unite the Hindus and Muslims or does it divide them more and more? Does it enable us to defend our country, and defeat the bureaucracy's policy of deadlock? The last eighteen months show that to play with satyagraha in the present situation is to aid the bureaucracy in crushing our people, to intensify the food famine, and paralyse national defence.

To play with satyagraha and no-tax is to create riots, and aid the hoarder in starving our people to death.

It is the same path of disruption which our nation was provoked into following by the imperialist repression of August, 1942.

### **Against the Aggressor**

Fellow Patriots! Our nation, robbed of its leaders, is facing the gravest crisis to-day. On the borders of Bengal, reeling under the death-blow of famine, lurks the cowardly aggressor who has committed every kind of atrocity in China. Do not believe the



imperialist propaganda that Japan represents no danger. On the other hand, famine and epidemics, a devitalised and destitute people, constitute the biggest invitation to any aggressor.

The danger of aggression, of vile attack, increases. The Aggressor is bombing our cities and sending hundreds to death. That aggressor has to be unitedly resisted at all costs—to save our people.

### **Battle For Food**

On top of this comes the internal danger of country-wide famine. The shadow of death lengthens over the entire land. Famine, pestilence, epidemics—all together threaten to slay by the million and entirely ruin our country.

Five million have already perished in Bengal for want of food. The same fate awaits every province, the whole of India, if Congressmen do not unite for people and call upon every Hindu and Muslim to protect the bread of his family and the milk of his children.

### **Independence Day Calls**

Congressmen! In the name of every martyr that has fallen in the sacred cause of independence, in the name of the five millions who perished in Bengal, the Independence Day bids you to lead the battle for food, to call upon the League patriot to join you for the single aim of saving our families from destitution and death.

It calls upon you to embark on a joint campaign against the hoarders, against his power to send people to death and to demand rationing, price-control and control of stocks to ensure a square meal for all.

It calls on you to see that the rich do not fatten on food while the poor starve to death, that none starves because of bureaucratic bungling while there is ample food in the country.

It calls upon you to ask the peasant to sell all his surplus grain to authorised agents, and to see that the plan for control of crops, started by the Government, is not allowed to be ruined through bureaucratic incompetence but succeeds in the interests of all.

It is your responsibility to see that this year's crop does not go into the hands of the hoarders ; otherwise, the grim fact to Bengal will be repeated all over. Only a joint front and joint activity of the Congress and League parties will ensure its safety.

### **Towards National Government**

Out of such a joint front will grow not only unity for food, but also unity for the release of leaders, and for National Government—our irresistible sanction before which the bureaucratic resistance must crumble.

Congressmen working in the forefront of the food struggle will be the most convincing argument to secure Muslim support for the release of national leaders ; the joint work in the service of our countrymen will remove Congress misunderstanding about the League and its demands. The battle for food will really become the battle for power and freedom.

Independence Day this year bids us to wipe out the infamy of disunity, which keeps the bureaucracy in power, holds the leaders in jail, and makes us helpless witness of millions of deaths.

It bids up to raise the banner of Congress-League unity to defeat the bureaucracy's policy of deadlock, to release the leaders, to secure food for our people and establish a National Government of national defence.

### **No Reason for Despair**

Congressmen ! Shall we sit with folded hands thinking that unity is not possible when ruin and death stare us in the face?

Shall we despair of unity when 100 million Muslims are awakening to national consciousness and declare their resolve to liquidate Imperialism? Should we commit the crime of turning our back on unity when to unite is to win? Should we play with satyagraha which in the present circumstances only disrupts our ranks?

### **We Are Winning**

The Progressive forces of the peoples of the world range themselves on our side.

The great labour movements of Britain and America fully support our demand for release of our leaders, for national Government and national freedom. The labour organisation in Britain expose the imperialist lies about the Congress, about India and incessantly campaign for Indian freedom and stand in common front with us against the policy of Amery & Co.

The great victories of the Soviet are smashing the thrones of all tyrants and creating conditions for the equality of nations and freedom for all.

What right have we to despair, to say, that we will not unite, when to unite is to win freedom for our country!

*AWAY WITH DESPAIR AND FRUSTRATION !*

*FORWARD TO THE IRRESISTIBLE UNITY OF OUR PEOPLE, OF THE CONGRESS AND THE LEAGUE, FOR FOOD, DEFENCE AND RELEASE OF LEADERS!*

# NATIONAL UNITY FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE MOTHERLAND

## A PATRIOTIC POLICY AND REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION FOR INDIA'S DEFENCE—FOR A FREE INDIA IN A FREE WORLD!

*(From People's war No. 13, 4th October 1942)*

### 1. AN HISTORIC SESSION

#### First Open Sitting

THE meeting of the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was an historic Session and for *two* reasons. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India was meeting openly for the first time in its history. The Session was announced in the daily press throughout India. Central Committee members and invited representatives of the Provincial Units came to the Session from all parts of the country. They met in the Office of the General Secretary at the Central Headquarters of the Communist Party in Bombay. The walls were decorated with large-size portraits of Lenin, Stalin and Timoshenko, and draped with big bright red flags with hammer and sickle. In a corner hung a red velvet banner sent by the proletariat of Leningrad to the workers of India. It was a thrilling reunion of 30 comrades, under the banner of Lenin-Stalin. Every one felt it as we stood at attention to the strains of the *International* sung by the Bombay Students' Patriotic Squad. Some were freshly released from jail, some had

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*(Resolutions of the two Plenums of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India held in September 1942 and February 1943 respectively)*

recently popped up from underground, some were new bright faces, who had awakened to communism in the period of the war.

From 14 years the Party had struggled against repression. It had taken hard knocks and given some. From a scattered network of local groups in the working class centres, it had grown into an organised force in the national politics of our country, with a mass following among the working class and kisan masses throughout the land. That was why it had won its legality.

It was leading and mobilising its class loyally and success fully. It served the motherland steadfastly. It had earned the love and admiration of the patriots and the people. That was why it had carved out its legality.

The Government could not crush it through 14 years of repression, through the persecution of its leaders, through driving it underground. The Party stepped forward determined to unite and rally the people, for National Defence, for National Freedom. That was why it had won its legality and was holding its first open Central Committee Session. That was the first reason why this was an historic Session.

### **The Task Before It**

There was a *second* reason too. The Session was meeting at the most critical moment in the life of our nation. The hordes of Japanese imperialists were massing themselves on the borders of Bengal and Assam to pounce upon that part of our country as soon as the monsoon passed off. At a time when our country and our people were standing in the direst peril, at such a time our land stood enveloped in the flames of grave internal crisis. At a time when it was required that our people should unite in one unbroken front to man the defences of our country, to organise a total people's resistance against the coming invader, at such a time the foreign bureaucracy continued to ride over the shoulders of our people and make a real national people's defence impossible. Instead, we were faced with the grim reality of imperialist repression stalking the land, of infuriated patriots and people tearing up the means of national defence and economy, and unleashing the forces of disruption and anarchy. The Central Committee was meeting amidst such a situation and was faced with the stupendous task of hammering out a clear-cut, bold and a united policy, a policy which would enable our Party, and its every unit, to effectively intervene in the situation,

to lead the people out of the morass of disruption and anarchy and demoralisation on to the firm path of National Unity. National Resistance and National Freedom. On the shoulders of the Central Committee lay the responsibility of forging a policy and a practice which would enable our people, led by our Party, to make history. This was the second reason why it was a historic Session.

### **Ours—A People's Party**

When we talk of our "historic Session", it is neither a mere hackneyed phrase nor sheer boastfulness. It is stark reality, which Party members and supporters must grasp in all its significance. Though only 15 years old, our Party has grown to the stature of a real people's Party, it occupies a proud place in the national politics of our land, it has an international role which must not be overlooked. It is necessary to grasp the meaning of these three aspects of the greatness of our Party. For they alone will enable us to see the supreme importance of the decisions, and realise the grim responsibility that rests on our shoulders of carrying them out. Comrade Joshi again and again stressed these points to inspire the delegates with confidence and courage to face the new tasks. In his very opening speech on the 15th September, he gave three striking facts to show how ours was already a people's Party. He announced three donations : one was from an old Kisan woman from Malabar. She had nothing but a cow and she gave it to the Party. The second was Rs. 500 from a British soldier lad, a communist at present in India, who gave away all his savings. The third was from Comrade Namboodripad, the leader of the Provincial Party Unit in Kerala, who gave away all his property worth Rs. 30,000 to the Party. The facts speak for themselves. Our Party is the third biggest party in our country after the National Congress and the Muslim League, and in the international field it has to play a role which is next in importance to that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to that of the Communist Party of China. Comrade Joshi underlined these facts also in order to impress upon the minds of the delegates the immensity of the task which faced them.

## **2. A SESSION OF POLITICAL UNITY**

On the 15th September when the Session opened, the only business done was the sending of messages of greetings. The first

one was addressed to our comrades in jail. This specially mentioned Comrade R. D. Bhardwaj, a member of the Polit Bureau, Comrades Dange and Batliwala and Comrade Ghate. Short messages of fraternal greetings were sent to the Communist Party of Great Britain, The Communist Party of the U. S. A., as well as to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) and the Chinese Communist Party.

It was on the 16th that the main business of the session began. On the 16th, two main political reports on the main resolution were delivered by comrades G. Adhikari and P. C. Joshi. The 17th and 18th were devoted to the reports of the various provincial delegates on the political situation, to discussion and to the final reply. On the 19th, the main political resolution was adopted as improved and amended by the previous sessions.

### **A Period of Peril**

What was the main achievement of the first three days of the Session which were devoted to the main political resolution? The Session outlined the Party's line and practical policy in the present crisis with complete political unanimity. It put forward before the people a policy which is patriotic to the core, a policy of national unity, a policy of running a countrywide unity campaign. The two main reports given by Comrades Adhikari and Joshi were complementary, if one explained and developed the basic political slogan of the period by presenting a basic political review, the other concentrated on the practical-political aspect and on the technique of the unity campaign.

The *first* thing which both the reports as well as the resolution sought to bring forward sharply was the character of the present period as one of the direst peril. On the one hand, our country was threatened with invasion as never before. On the other hand, the Government had set the country aflame by its murderous policy of repression. That has created a grave situation. An atmosphere favourable to pro-Japanese sentiment and to the activities of the Fifth Column agents has been created. The national leadership had failed to fight back the imperialist offensive. Instead of building unity of the people for strengthening national defence, for taking the same into people's hands, it had chosen to remain inactive and had left the initiative entirely in the hands of imperialism. And now

a struggle had been unleashed in which the destruction of the means of national defence and disruption of national economy and production were the main features. This was leading to a state of anarchy, disruption and demoralisation. The moral and material defence of our country are being undermined. It is the game of the British bureaucracy which succeeds. It is the Jap Fascist vultures whose path is cleared.

### **And Of Opportunity**

But this is only one side of the picture. Both the reports underlined the fact, that if it was the period of the gravest peril, it was also the moment of the greatest opportunity. This was true not only of the specific situation in our own country, but for every country to-day and for the whole world. The independence and democratic liberties of every country were menaced by the fascist aggressors. But at the same time, a gigantic unity of the peoples was being forged in every country, and on a world scale to fight this war of liberation on every front, firmly and unitedly after the model of the Soviet Union and under its leadership. The great opportunity for our country and our people stands as much as it does for the other peoples, only if we forge our irresistible national unity for defending the country in alliance with the United Nations. To turn our people from the suicidal path of disunity and destruction of the means of national defence, to lead them on to the path of national unity to build national resistance and win National Government, that was the task before our Party. The second point stressed in the reports was: Though fascist enslavement threatened every country, the opportunity for winning freedom in a free world stood equally before every one of us and the key to it was national unity.

### **Slogan of National Unity**

The third most important point which was hammered home in the reports was the revolutionary significance of the unity slogan and the key importance of the slogan of the unity campaign issued by the Session. It was pointed out that our slogan of national unity was not one "more" path, apart from the path of "struggle" but the one and the only path. What has got to be understood in all its sharpness, is that in the present situation national unity alone will save the nation, national unity alone will lead to freedom. Any



other path must lead to death and destruction. Comrade Joshi in his co-report pointed out that the vacillations that were discerned in our ranks on the 9th August were due to the incorrect understanding of this slogan.

### **Revolutionary Significance**

Our slogan of national unity, Congress-League unity for national defence and for National Government was understood in a formal way, as something to be achieved through top negotiations, as something which by itself would bring us National Government. National unity for national defence was NOT understood as the revolutionary struggle of the Indian people for freedom in the present situation. It was NOT understood as a real people's movement which had to be built to smash imperialist obstruction. It was not realised that our national disunity was the only remaining strength of the imperialist bureaucracy, and that its strategy to stick to power would be to maintain and intensify that disunity. Failure of the Cripps negotiations and the events that followed brilliantly confirmed this. After the Allahabad A.I.C.C. Session when imperialism began taking advantage of our national disunity to spread further disruption, we ought to have taken the initiative to launch a nationwide unity campaign. We did not. That showed that we had not grasped the plain fact that to rally the masses for achieving national unity, Congress-League unity, for the defence of the Motherland was the only revolutionary struggle for freedom in the present situation. The result was that when after the 9th of August and later, the Congress struggle for destroying defence in the name of freedom developed, our boys were bogged. "Not struggle but let us have unity first"—this is what some of our comrades tried to say and thus exposed themselves to the danger of playing straight into the hands of the struggle-mad patriots.

### **Self-Criticism**

All this arose because we did not understand national unity as a process of struggle, as a revolutionary proletarian line. Comrade Joshi summed up the self-criticism in the following words :

"Even the Central leadership of the Party did not work out the slogans of national unity in its practical details. The general political slogan was, of course, given but the practical steps necessary to

implement it were not taken. The immediate practical lead, the call for an immediate unity campaign, should have been given after the Allahabad A.I.C.C. Political slogans are not enough, unless the practical lead is given for day-to-day practice in implementing these slogans.”

### **A Patriotic Policy**

This was, in fact, the key point of the main political reports and the starting point for the main practical-political slogan issued by the Session, namely, “Launch nationwide unity campaign!” One more point which arises straight out of this must be clearly grasped. The struggle for national unity and the unity campaign is not only the anti-thesis of the Congress struggle for sabotage and deadlock, but its anti-dote. The Congress campaign means anarchy, disruption and chaos. It means disunity incarnate now and growing disunity as struggle develops. The Congress campaign, therefore, puts the bureaucracy on the top of the people and isolates the congress. Our Unity campaign cannot grow side by side with this disunity campaign but at its expense. In other words, our political and practical struggle to isolate the saboteurs and the promoters of anarchy, etc., cannot be separated from our campaign for national unity. In fact, a mere campaign to dissuade people from sabotage, and acts of violence, etc., which is not simultaneously linked with the political campaign for national unity, is liberalism and not Bolshevism. Thus our slogan of national unity, would be nothing if it is not a campaign for people’s mobilisation for the release of leaders, for National Government based on Congress-League unity, for national defence. The Congress slogan of struggle is a call for people’s disunity and demoralisation. As our campaign for national unity gathers force, we are able to wrest Congressmen and patriots from the grip of the forces of anarchy and disruption, we are able to isolate the hardened disruptors, saboteurs and fifth columnists, we are able to put the united people on the top of the bureaucracy, and save the nation and the Congress. This is how our policy of national unity is the patriotic policy through which alone our nation can advance forward. Such were the key points of the main reports on the political situation.

### **Provincial Reports**

These main reports were followed by the reports of the C. C.

members and of provincial delegates. What did these speeches show? There was no complacency in these provincial reports. The lead for self-criticism given by the General Secretary was followed up by the comrades. There was no glossing over difficulties. The provincial delegates criticised their own work and experience in the light of the main reports. The speeches and reports of the provincial delegates continued for a day and a half. As the speeches proceeded they unrolled a mass of practical experience which not only confirmed the general line of the main reports but supplied material for chalking out practical-political tasks for each province. They enabled each one present to get a better idea of the all-India Party and greatly helped the members to come to a common understanding .

### **Joshi's Summing Up**

Really Speaking, the speeches and the reports of the provincial leaders and the C. C. members only led us towards a common political understanding. It became real and gripping to us only when we heard the brilliant political summing up given by Comrade P. C. Joshi. He looked into these speeches and reports as if in a mirror to find out how much the slogans of the basic reports have been understood. He then reiterated the key slogans. This is what he said:

“Let us be clear that if the struggle is collapsing, it is doing so under the stress of imperialist repression and its own contradictions and NOT yet through our positive intervention. Either we solve the national crisis through national unity or terror wipes out the whole national movement. Such is the grim alternative. We are the only organised Party which can intervene effectively and save the nation. No one else can. Let us get it clear that this campaign of anarchy and sabotage is not just mob-violence and destruction. Its political significance, as disruptor of the national movement and national unity must be grasped. Therefore it can only be fought on a political plane, firstly, through political explanatory campaign to counteract pro-Jap feeling, to isolate the fifth-columnist, from the misguided patriotic mass, by sharp political campaign against Jap and Fascist agents. Secondly, through national unity campaign, organised as a big mass upsurge: only then can we knock the initiative out of the hands of imperialism. This is the task which faces our Party to-day.”

After this general introduction, Comrade Joshi took the individual reports of the comrades from the various provinces, diagnosed them, so to speak, politically and, organisationally, in brief and trenchant characterisations and prescribed to each the tasks. It was a remarkable achievement which was immensely appreciated by every comrade and did more to instruct and unify our team politically than any abstract political discussion would have ever done.

After three days discussion, the main political resolution was passed with minor amendments. Three days' collective thinking enabled us to forge a common political understanding of the grim situation that faced us, of the policy which we had to carry out in order to transform that situation.

We were confident that collectively we had arrived at a correct policy. That was our strength

The responsibility of effectively intervening and saving our nation fell on the shoulders of our Party and we were determined to be equal to it.

We had faith in the patriotic instincts of our people. Our persistent explanation and their bitter experience was bound to turn them round. Already a few disillusioned student patriots and Congressmen were turning to us. The campaign for Congress-League unity was catching among the Muslim masses. That gave us courage and confidence.

Ours is the Party which sees the future clearly, and has the strength to mould the present with firm hands. For ours is the Party of the working class, the Party which faces the future with undying hope, the Party which is everywhere in the forefront leading and unifying the people, in every country, for victory in, this war of liberation.

### **3. FOR A REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION**

Formulating a correct policy and chalking out practical-political tasks is not enough. For they will remain on paper if we do not have a revolutionary organisation to take that policy to the people, and to carry out those tasks.

That is why the Session devoted nearly two days to the question of party organisation. The main organisational report was delivered by Comrade P. C. Joshi. It was a long and detailed report, which

took the General Secretary about 7 hours to deliver. In printed form, it would be an extremely instructive and inspiring document.

### **Basic Organisational Tasks**

Our basic organisational tasks to-day follow directly from the nature of the present period and our basic political task to-day. The biggest national crisis is on at a time when the country is faced with Jap invasion. As already explained in the political report, our main political slogans of to-day are as follows:

—Our Party and our policy alone can save the nation.

—Unite the nation and we win!

—This is the simple policy we have to take to the masses in the shortest possible time

—To teach the people unity in action is to rally the nation, is to win.

—Every patriot is bound to respond sooner or later to our Unity Campaign, for there is no way out for our nation except to unite.

The general organisational tasks which follow from this are :

(a) Build a mass Party out of what we have to-day by extending it and by improving it.

(b) Build organised leadership from top to bottom, moving as one team, trained, disciplined and devoted, capable of leading the Party as the unifier of our people.

### **Re-Educated The Party Leadership**

Comrade Joshi then began to enumerate the practical jobs which have to be undertaken to be able to fulfil the above—named tasks. You cannot build a Party without building Party builders. Hence the first job is to re-educate the entire Party leadership. How to do this? This will have to be mainly done by organising special central and local schools for “Party Building” run by the C.C. or by the P.C. All the same leaders must do intensive self-education. Here are comrade Joshi’s tips for the same : Study party literature and the classics seriously. Don’t neglect the study of the classics. Get drilling for job-doing and reporting through your own Party Units. Use “People’s War” for the study circles you take and the reporting that you do.

### **Organised Working of Units**

The next practical job he mentioned was : Let every party Unit

work in an organised manner. To explain this, Comrade Joshi took up a detailed review of each party organ from the Polit-Bureau downward to the Cell. He nailed down what were the actual faults in the functioning of each unit and then suggested remedies. It is not necessary to go over all that here. But here is something treachant which our Comrade Secreaty said about the cell and its leader. We are quoting it in full :

“Those who complain that cells don’t function because cadres are backward are really anti-party elements. The Party leader who bewails about backwardness and incompetence of the rank and filers is nothing but a snob, a bureaucratised boss. He can never become a real party organiser. The truth is that no Party has got rank and file cadres likes ours. They are the cream of our people as they are. They are the makers of our history.”

Here is what comrade Joshi says about a cell leader :

“without trained Party functionaries, the Party cannot be build and the key is the cell leader. He is the leader of the people in his locality, factory or village. He must, therefore, be an all-rounder, agitator and unifier and leader of the team. Very often he has these qualities inherent in him. This is especially so in the case of working class or kisan cadars. The purpose of Party training is to transmute these natural gifts into conscious qualities. The cell leader must get his unit members linked with the mass organisations and mass work. Then alone will the cell live and grow.”

### **Strengthen The party!**

“What must we do to strengthen the Party?” was the next question Comrade Joshi took up. Here are the directives he put forward : 1) Enforce and tighten discipline 2) Educate the functionaries, for without trained functionaries no Party can be built 3) Every Party member must do minimum jobs through his units 4) Purge out the chronically inactive and disruptive elements 5) Strengthen the proletarian base of the Party, by training sand promoting working-class cadres into Trade Union and Party leaders. This is not the place to go into the details of these and of many other important points he mentioned.

## **To Drift is to Die!**

Comrade Joshi concluded his organisational report in these inspiring words :

“Our nation is in crisis, this is the burning reality. National unity is the way out, this is our policy. How can it be worked without iron unity inside our own Party, which to-day means political unity in a rapidly changing situation? How can national disruption on a mass scale be prevented without the hardest work we have done in our lives? How can hard work be done except through every member functioning tip-top through his unit? To-day the job of all patriots of our Motherland has fallen on the shoulders of our Party. If we collapse, our people die, our nation perishes. We must do the jobs which will be decided in the session. Only by doing them shall we prove our worth as Bolsheviks. Only by doing them shall we unite our nation, fight the fascists and win freedom.”

## **Organisational Decisions**

Comrade Joshi's report was adopted by the C.C. after a detailed discussion lasting over one full day and the following important decisions were adopted :

1. Party Convention to be held on Lenin Day (1943).
2. Party Membership to be increased by 100% so that the total membership of the Party reaches the figure of 10,000, with 20,000 volunteers, by Lenin Day. Create conditions for the call of 50,000 Communists from the Convention by May Day.
3. Give a call for raising two lacs of rupees as Party Funds to be collected by Lenin Day, out of which 50% would go to the Provincial Committees.

## **4. OTHER QUESTIONS**

The third most important question taken up by the Session was the Report on Production policy and Trade Union (T. U.) tasks by Comrade B. T. Ranadive. Total national resistance against the Fascist invaders demands that production is not only organised but expanded and stepped up. The imperialist bureaucracy which boasts of having stepped up Indian industrial production for war purposes, has really throttled it by methods which involve brutal exploitation of workers and the suppression of their T. U. rights.

They have completely disregarded the needs of Indian industries and have created chaotic conditions. Indian industrialists though they want rapid industrialisation of the country for National defence and back the demand for National Government for the purpose, have never displayed a national outlook in industry and have ground down workers with the same callousness as the imperialists. Having described the policies pursued by the bureaucrats and industrialists, the resolution on production moved by B. T. Ranadive goes on to say :

“Recognising....the vital role played by production, the Party declares that production can no longer be treated as the special concern of profiteers and the bureaucracy. On the other hand production has become the concern of the people whose very existence and freedom depend upon it. Popular National control over production exercised through National Government enjoying the full confidence of the people is the basic demand of the hour.”

In order that the working class should be able to play its role effectively in organising national production for the defence of the country, it raises certain immediate demands of action. These are as follows : Adequate dearness allowance, 25% rise in basic wage, recognition of Trade Unions and full freedom to organise mill and factory Committes, and limitation of profits. The Resolution states further, “While on no account are we prepared to surrender the right to strike, yet it is our policy to minimise stoppages and strikes consistently with the defence of the interests of the working class and the Nation.” The resolution further states “Our policy then is to seek settlement of disputes through negotiations backed by the united strength of the workers and resort to direct actions only when we are compelled to do so”. Such in brief is the Party’s policy on production. The same resolution. lays down our general tasks in the Trade Unions in the present period.

Besides Comrade Ranadive’s report on Production there were Reports on Pakistan and National unity by Comrade Adhikari and on the States’ peoples’ movement by Comrade S. G. Sardesai.

### **Report On People’s War**

Comrade Joshi gave a report on our Party organ “*People’s War.*” At the outset he formulated the question for comrades to speak on : Is it an effective populariser of the policy of the Party?



His own criticism of the paper was that it was not as effective a collective agitator as it ought to be. Besides it was not being used as a collective organiser by the comrades. The poor sale of Hindi, Urdu and Marathi editions (viz 2,000 each) showed that our comrades were not making special efforts to take it to the working class and use it as an educator. The sale of the three Indian Editions must easily go up to 5,000. That corresponds to our present influence among the working class. The English edition began with 5,000 and has risen to 9,000. It must be taken to 20,000 by the 7th November. There were very interesting speeches by the Provincial leaders on the various points raised by Comrade Joshi in his report. The conclusion and criticisms given by Comrade Joshi in his report were confirmed. Decisions regarding pushing up the sales of the paper as mentioned above were taken.

### **Conclusion**

The most interesting feature of the Session was the last item. When all the agenda was gone through we sat down to review the session. Every comrade was asked to say what he had learnt. Comrade after comrade declared his determination to do the job better. It was a Session which bore the impress of complete political unanimity. Everyone of us was inspired with common zeal to get to grip with the common political tasks which faced us in the critical period that faced the Party. As the Session closed to the chorus of the Internationale lustily sung by us, each one of us made the silent vow that he must become a man of Stalin's mould in which the new humanity is cast. Onward to the job! Onward to victory!

## **SOLVE NATIONAL CRISIS THROUGH NATIONAL UNITY**

*(Political Resolution passed by the Enlarged Plenum of the  
C.C. of C.P.I. during its September Session, 1942.)*

### **Imperialist Repression**

1. THIS Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, condemns unequivocally the military and police rule of blood and terror let loose by the imperialist

bureaucracy against the people, following the arrest of the national leaders on the 9th August, 1942. The main responsibility for plunging the country into a grave and perilous crisis, which not only undermines the cause of the defence and freedom of India, but also that of the freedom-loving peoples of the United Nations, must be fastened on the shoulders of the British Government. The National Leadership had declared their readiness to undertake the full responsibility for uniting and organising the people for the armed defence of the country, in alliance with the United Nations and thus to take their full share in the war of world freedom against Fascist aggression, provided that Indian independence was recognised and a provisional Government set up, enjoying the confidence of the people and supported by the major political parties. But the British Government instead of pursuing the policy of winning the friendship and alliance of the Indian people, have persistently refused to part with power. Taking advantage of our national disunity, of the frustration and desperation of our national leadership, they have launched a war against the people, and are provoking a country-wide conflict which is being fully utilised by Fifth Columnists and Jap agents. Mr. Churchill speaking as the head of the British Government, has threatened to continue this diehard imperialist policy to its logical conclusion.

### **A Fifth-Column Incendiary Policy**

2. This policy of the British Government is an incendiary and Fifth column policy. It prepares for the Indian people the ghastly fate of Burma and Malaya. It stabs the cause of the British and American peoples, of the Soviet and Chinese people in the back. The Communist Party. warns the British Government that if it persists in this policy, if it persists in its attempt to crush the Congress, it will only succeed in creating a common disaster for the British and the Indian peoples. The only way out of this perilous situation which grows more critical every day, is to stop this offensive of repression against the people and the Congress, to release Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders, to lift the ban on the Congress and to open negotiations with the Congress and the other political parties especially the Muslim League, for the establishment of a provisional National Government, fully empowered and determined to unite and mobilise the people for the

defence and freedom of the country in close alliance with the United Nations. The Communist Party of India, which is pledged to forge national unity to solve this national crisis, appeals to the workers and the progressive peoples of Britain and America to bring pressure upon the British Government to concede these just national demands of the Indian people and thus clear the path of our common victory in this war of liberation.

### **Campaign Of Sabotage And Anarchy**

3. The arrest of Congress leaders and the regime of repression which the mad bureaucracy is intensifying every day has called forth a country-wide upsurge of people's indignation and mass conflict. Bands of honest but blind patriots are seeking to lead this mass upsurge by organising it as a Congress struggle for freedom of the country. The technique of the struggle is, in the main, to organise sabotage of communications (cutting telegraph wires and removing rails, etc.) to stop production, and to paralyse the apparatus of administration by all means. They hope by these methods to bring about the fall of the Government and the transfer of power to the people. What they are achieving, however, is exactly the opposite. By giving this pernicious direction to the anger of the people, they are only organising the destruction of the national defence and economy of our own country and are giving free scope to the forces of anarchy. This state of things suits the Fifth Column elements and Fascist agents the most, who are attempting to seize the leadership of the movement and to planfully reinforce the efforts at destroying the defensive capacities of the nation. Secondly, as the movement spreads, there is dislocation in national economy and growing anarchy. This hits the people and helps the would-be aggressor. It disunites the people more and more and thereby strengthens the hands of the bureaucracy. Thirdly, the indiscriminate and merciless repression by the police and military, firing, lathi-charges, whipping and collective fines, further aggravates the situation. As a result of this, a section of the people is angered and is driven to more mad acts of sabotage, while the bulk of the people begin to feel demoralised and helpless. They give way to moods of despair and frustration, which nourishes pro-Japanese sentiments and saps the will of the people to resist aggression.

Thus between the desperate activities of the blind patriots which

are being taken advantage of more and more by the fifth-columnists, on the one hand, and the mad repression of the bureaucrats on the other, the defensive capacities of the nation as well as people's morale, strength and unity are being undermined, making the country ripe to fall under the axe of the Fascists.

### **Where It Leads**

4. How did this situation arise ? It arose because the national leadership instead of going all-out to unite the people to rouse them to do everything which strengthens the country's defences against the fascist aggressors and forging mass sanctions for securing National Government for national defence, chose the opportunist path of inactivity, of non-embarrassing non-cooperation with defence measures, hoping thereby to win the national demand as a gift from imperialism. The Communist Party had warned against this policy, which amounted to leaving the initiative and the fate of the nation entirely in the hands of imperialism. This only strengthened the obstinate attitude of the bureaucracy to deny power to the Indian people and led to the growing moods of frustration and defeatism among the nationalist masses. Instead of drawing from this the requisite lessons about the urgency of unity, the national leadership took one more step in the direction of its own opportunist policy. It advanced from non-cooperation and neutrality to a plan of active opposition to measures of national defence in the name of launching a struggle for the national demand.

The path along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defences inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even loot and arson. It makes the national movement the prey of bureaucratic provocation in the name of struggle. Finally, it creates a mass basis for Fifth Column activity in the name of patriotism. It is a path, in short, which strikes at the very root of that people's unity which alone can be the means of securing National Government and ensuring successful National defence. Thus the policy of the national leaders instead of leading the people unitedly to compel the bureaucracy to concede National Government as an instrument of national defence and freedom, has left it free to hit at the people. It is leading the nation to a state of moral and political disruption and paralysis

which far from helping the people to get their freedom can only clear the path of the invader. Such is the disastrous culmination of policies of not relying upon the strength of the people, i.e. on national unity, and leaving the initiative in the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy.

### **Favourable Factors**

5. The situation can yet be retrieved. The Imperialist bureaucracy stands isolated and weakened as never before. The more it beats and represses the people, the more it earns the hatred and disgust of all sections of the nation. It has failed miserably in its efforts to build an anti-Congress front. Its political, economic and military policies are utterly bankrupt and it is quite incapable of uniting, leading and saving the nation in the crisis, created by the menace of invasion.

Secondly, a mighty potential basis for building national unity is there already. This broad unity, however, is by no means fully behind the present struggle launched by the Congress, on the other hand, sections oppose it. But it can be mobilised fully behind the main demands of the Congress, which are national demands. viz, recognise India's independence, negotiate for an all-round settlement, set up a National Provisional Government for mobilising the people for a people's defence against the aggressors in alliance with the United Nations. Such a national unity, broadest ever achieved, is within reach and if actually realised, will at once foil the game of the imperialist bureaucracy and bring it to its knees.

Thirdly, the demand of freedom and National Government for India is gathering ever-growing support among the working masses and the peoples of Great Britain and America. The growing strength of the anti-fascist national front in the countries of the United Nations, led by their Communist Parties and backed by the power and prestige of the Soviet Union, will stand behind our united strength to defend the country in alliance with them and make our national demand irresistible. Such are the favourable factors and such is the potential opportunity present in the perilous situation itself.

### **Unity The Way Out**

6. The Communist Party declares that the way out of the national crisis does not lie either in the direction of continuing present

brutal repression to crush the Congress as the imperialists, the loyalists, and the Royists suggest nor in the direction of intensifying the offensive against the apparatus of national defence, and production as the Forward Blocists, Congress Socialists and many Congressmen propose. The path of the crazy imperialists and that of the blind patriots together would lead to the same result, namely, to disruption and anarchy, to national frustration and desperation, which will serve only the interests of the fascist invaders and of no one else. The only way out is the path which the proletariat and its vanguard—the Communist Party is putting before the people, the path of achieving the broadest possible national unity, based on Congress-League unity.

The slogan of national unity is not a mere formula, or just a phrase to be flung in the face of those who advocate the path of so-called struggle. It is a revolutionary policy of rallying the broadest possible sections of the people for the defence of their common interests and the achievement of their most pressing demands. In the present world situation, it is the most potent and powerful and the only weapon which the people of India have to forge and wield in order to wrest power from the hands of the British imperialists, and to successfully defend the country against foreign aggression. Militarily, politically and economically, the rule of the British imperialists is at present weaker than ever before. It is fast disintegrating under the hammerblows of the growing anti-fascist unity of the peoples of the united Nations. Its last and only weapon of withholding power from the people now is to keep them divided. The disunity of the Indian people is the main basis of its remaining strength in India and which it utilises to drive a wedge between India and the peoples of the United Nations. That is why complete national unity in the present circumstances must generate such a force before which the bureaucratic opposition must collapse. This is the decisive significance of national unity, of Congress-League unity, today! It is going to be the final blow that must compel Indians' present masters to sue for terms to the Indian people. Congress-League unity is not going to bring about a "change of heart" in Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery. It is going to transform the relative strength of the British imperialists and the Indian people. It is going to be the irresistible sanction of the Indian people behind their demand for a National Government.

## **The Main Task-Unity Campaign**

7. The central tasks to which the Party must address itself to-day are threefold :

- a) Organise a countrywide campaign for national unity;
- b) Carry on persistent political explanation among workers, kisans, student militants and Congressmen. how the present struggle leads to destruction and anarchy and is suicidal ;
- c) Continuous and widespread agitation among Hindu and Muslim masses for Congress-League unity.

The main slogans of the unity campaign are : release Mahatma Gandhi and the national leaders, stop repression, check destruction, sabotage and anarchy, lift the ban on the Congress, negotiate for an all-round settlement, set up provisional national Government for India's defence. The campaign may vary in form and in slogans from place to place regard being paid to the varying development of the political situation. The aim should be to make the campaign as broad as possible and effective. It may begin as a campaign for signatures on a joint manifesto framed so as to secure the broadest local support. It may develop through a series of discussions and private meetings. It should further develop as a campaign for restoring peace and civil liberties, and culminate in the formation of an all-Parties defence committee for pressing for the withdrawal of collective fines, for tackling the problem of food supply and profiteering and for strengthening the morale of the population for resisting the fascist aggressors.

## **Congress-League Unity**

The slogans for Congress-League unity campaign should be:

(a) Congress-League agreement to set up a Provisional National Government for the successful defence of the country and freedom.

(b) The positions already taken by the Congress as well as by the Muslim League on the question of the right of Muslims in certain areas to self-determination, can with a given good will on both sides, afford a basis for settlement here and now.

On the basis of these two slogans, the campaign for unity must be run among the Muslim as well as Hindu masses. To the Hindu masses we must explain that what is just in this Pakistan demand,

namely the right of Muslim nationalities to autonomous state existence, including the right of separation must be conceded. It will give us unity now and lead to freedom. It will give us greater unity tomorrow and serve a solid foundation for the freedom thus achieved. Similarly as we must get the Congress-minded people to recognise the urgency of the Congress conceding the right of self determination of the Muslim nationalities and thus hasten the achievement of Congress-League unity. To the Muslim masses, we must show that Muslim independence can only come by joining with the Hindus and the Congress for joint action. Hence they must get the League leadership to move for Congress-League unity.

### **Tasks Among the Working Class**

It is above all the strength and unity of the working class movement which must be the indispensable and firm basis for achieving the unity of the entire people for the solution of the national crisis and the winning of national Government. Therefore, our first and foremost task must be to re-establish firmly the leadership of the Unions and the Party in the industrial centres, and stamp out the efforts of provocators and of misguided patriots to drag the working class into the suicidal campaign of sabotage and anarchy. For this :

(a) We must conduct a political explanatory campaign among workers, through street-corner and basti (chawl) meetings as well as through public meetings ;

(b) establish Vigilance Committees of militants in bastis (chawl) and mills to counteract panic-mongering, check rowdyism and the activities of irresponsible provocators intent on sabotage or stoppage of production;

(c) we must concentrate more energy and attention on Union work and pay meticulous attention to the day-to-day and outstanding grievances such as dearness allowances, bonus, victimisation, etc. Unite workers to win these demands, fully utilising the existing legal machinery. Do not leave provocator and political adventurers to take the initiative and thus bring about dislocation of industry through this end ;

(d) we must make the working class conscious of the leading role it has to play in restoring and maintaining peace, in developing the drive for national unity, for winning the national demand and thus leading the people as a whole.



## **Tasks Among The Kisans**

Among the Kisans, in the rural areas, we must conduct a sharp political campaign against the saboteurs and promoters of anarchy and should seek to build unity to restore peace and to win back civil liberties. In villages and rural areas, where collective fines have been imposed, we must strive develop all-parties unity committees to restore and maintain peace and carry on an agitation for the withdrawal of remission of the collective fines. Our slogans in the rural areas should be unity for restoring peace, unity for release of leaders, the winning of national demands and the saving of the nation; unity for solving food shortage and price problems relating to accumulated arrears of rent and debt. We must concentrate more energy and attention on the day-to-day work of the Kisan Sabhas.

## **Among The Students**

The first task is to carry on a political explanatory campaign among the militants who are being gripped by the mass frenzy for destruction, sabotage and anarchy. We must explain to them that to pursue the policy of permanent strikes, to go in for destruction and anarchy is not to play their part in the freedom movement. It only gives the bureaucracy the chance to drive them out of colleges, to disrupt institution life and to smash the student movement. This results in honest student patriots being driven into the hands of Fifth Columnists to be utilised as tools for undermining the nation's morale and defences. Our main slogan for the student movement is: "Maintain the unity of the student movement, revive institution life build unity movement for the national demands".

## **Conclusion**

The Committee recognises that the entire Party membership and its lower units have already been working on the basis of the line of work and agitation laid down in this resolution and have already won some significant successes. But the national crisis is by no means over and difficult turns are yet ahead. The Central Committee, therefore, calls upon every member and unit to spare no effort and sacrifice in order to fulfil the tasks set forth in this resolution.

## PAKISTAN & NATIONAL UNITY

*(Resolution passed by the Enlarged Plenum of the  
Central Committee of the Communist Party  
of India on the 19 th September, 1942)*

*[This resolution also appears on page 462 of this volume in  
connection with G. Adhikari's reporting.]*

**ALL-in national unity based on communal harmony and Congress-League joint front is today an urgent and pressing necessity to solve the present national crisis, to win National Government from the hands of the British imperialist bureaucracy and to defend our Motherland against the fascist aggressor. This has brought the controversy of Pakistan versus the unity of India sharply to the forefront. The Communist Party, therefore, lays down the main principles of the Communist policy on this issue.**

1. The Communist Party draws together the toilers of all castes, communities and nationalities in common class organisations (Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas, etc.). It unites them politically as the vanguard of the united national front for achieving the freedom of our country and democracy. This is the cornerstone of the policy of achieving communal unity.

2. To build the united national front of the peoples of the various communities and nationalities that inhabit India, for the defence and freedom of our country, it is however necessary to dispel the mutual distrust and suspicion that exists among them. This is a remnant of memories of past historical oppression and of present social inequalities arising out of the feudal imperialist exploitation. For this purpose, the basic rights of the communities and nationalities must be made an essential part of the programme of the united national front.

3. The programme of the U.N.F. must declare that in Free India, there will be perfect equality between nationalities and communities that live together in India. There will be no oppression of one nationality by another. There will be no inequalities or disabilities based on caste or community. To ensure this the national movement must recognise the following rights as part of its programme for national unity.

(a) Every section of the Indian people which has contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make-up and common economic life

would be recognised as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state within the free Indian union or federation and will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are homelands of such nationalities and which today are split up by the artificial boundaries of the present British provinces and of the so-called "Indian States" would be reunited and restored to them in free India. Thus free India of tomorrow would be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as the Pathans, Western Punjabis (dominantly Muslims), Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindusthanis, Rajasthanis, Gujeratis, Bengalis, Assamese, Beharies, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Karnatikis, Maharashtrians, Keralas, etc.

(b) If there are interspersed minorities in the new states thus formed their rights regarding their culture, language, education etc. would be guaranteed by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

(c) All disabilities, privileges and discrimination based on caste, race or community (such as untouchability and allied wrongs) would be abolished by Statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

4. Such a declaration of rights in as much as it concedes to every nationality as defined above, and therefore, to nationalities having Muslim faith, the right of autonomous state existence and of secession, can form the basis for unity between the National Congress and the League. For this would give to the Muslims wherever they are in an overwhelming majority in a contiguous territory which is their homeland, the right to form their autonomous states and even to separate if they so desire. In the case of the Bengali Muslims of the Eastern and Northern Districts of Bengal where they form an overwhelming majority, they may form themselves into an autonomous region as the state of Bengal or may form a separate state. Such a declaration therefore concedes the just essence of the Pakistan demand and has nothing in common with the separatist theory of dividing India into two nations on the basis of religions.

5. But the recognition of the right of separation in this form need not necessarily lead to actual separation. On the other hand, by dispelling the mutual suspicions, it brings about unity of action today and lays the basis for a greater unity in the free India of tomorrow. National unity forged on the basis of such a declaration and strengthened in the course of joint struggle in the defence of our motherland

is bound to convince the peoples of all India nationalities of the urgent need to stick together and to form a free Indian Union or Federation in which each National state would be a free and equal member with right secede. They will thus see this as the only path of protecting the freedom and democracy achieved and building, on that secure basis a greater unity of India than our country has ever seen.

In spite of the apparent conflict and seemingly insoluble difficulties, the burning desire for unity is taking firmer hold of the people who today follow the Congress or the League. Under the stress of the growing menace of the fascist invasion and of the present national crisis, the leadership of the two organisations also have moved closer together and in the direction of the very solution given in this resolution. There is no room whatsoever for defeatism on the question of unity. The Communist Party calls upon all patriots to join hands with it in popularising the principles laid down herein and thus speed up the realisation of Congress-League Unity, which is today the only path of national salvation for our Motherland in the hour of her gravest peril.

## **PRODUCTION POLICY & T.U. TASKS**

*(Resolution passed by the Enlarged plenum of the  
Central Committee of the Communist Party  
of India, 22nd September, 1942.)*

THIS meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India declares that not only has the Government failed to mobilise the industrial and productive resources of this country in the common fight against Fascism, but that its policy constitutes a growing menace to the safety of the country and only ensure chaos and collapse with the first impact of Japanese invasion.

The Government throttles the development of war industries and thereby undermines national defence. It is not able to utilise the existing industry to its full capacity and satisfy the normal requirements of the people. Its transport is breaking down, causing food famine and chaos in the country leading to a perilous situation in face of an enemy attack. Its production policy is based on a share—out of the gains of exploitation and appeals only to the profiteering

motive of industrial interests. There is no organised plan but that of organised profiteering and mere distribution of war orders. Through its Supply Department, it merely secures priority for state orders at the expense of the people. There is no plan to increase production to keep the normal life running, on the other hand, profiteering is already leading to a breakdown of normal life. With prices soaring high, articles of industrial production are getting beyond the reach of the people. Between high prices and the demands of the Supply Department, people are forced to go without the necessities of life.

There is no plan for protecting production and the normal life of the people against enemy attacks and invasion. No systematic air protection in industrial plants against plans air-raids, no for rescuing and evacuating industrial machinery, no plans to see that the economic life of the nation, its power of economic resistance, continues in face of any grave emergency.

The Government imposes unbearable economic burdens on the working class to satisfy the profiteers. It attempts to coerce the workers to accept them by using force and repression, by making repeated inroads on freedom of organisation and strikes. It attempts to run production through ordinances, prohibition of strikes, and free use of the police-force. Its formula of running production can be briefly summarised as—ban all strikes under threat of penalty and force the workers to accept insufferable conditions of life.

Against this policy of starvation and coercion, the indignation of the working class breaks out into strikes and angry riots. The policy of the Government forces the workers to stop production. It continuously jerks the industrial machine when it ought to be running smoothly and at a headlong speed. It alienates the workers from production, makes them hostile to it. It makes production synonymous with brutal exploitation and turns them away from building any national resistance through productive efforts.

With the continuation of this policy, stoppages and strikes become more and more frequent and production gets disorganised. With the growing hatred of the worker towards it, the will to run production for national resistance is daily sapped and the ground is prepared for a complete and total collapse of the production machine in face of enemy bombing and attack. The lessons of Bombay

and Calcutta in February last when thousands of workers evacuated on the rumour of Japanese bombing is an unmistakable portent of events to come.

The Government fails to secure the co-operation of the industrialists for an all-out plan to organise production. It shows open partiality to foreign concerns and creates lack of confidence and hostility among the industrialists. By denying National Government to the Indian people, by throttling industrial development, it has driven the national bourgeoisie to desperate acts of lockouts and deadlocks in production.

### **The Industrial Bourgeoisie**

The Indian industrialists stand opposed to Fascist aggression and fully support the demand for National Government. They stand for increased production and the development of industrial resources. They correctly accuse the Government of throttling industrial development and menacing the safety of the country.

Yet in practice, they do not display a national outlook towards production. They do not unite with the workers and the people to remove the bureaucratic stranglehold over production, they do not invite the co-operation of the workers to solve production problem; they fail to gather the workers' strength behind them and present a joint demand for increased production. They thus hinder the struggle for National Government and national production.

Instead they pursue a policy which pits the workers against them and disunites the struggle for increased national resistance. They oppose Trade Union organisations which alone can successfully mobilise the mass of the workers for the production struggle. They refuse to deal with them to settle the grievances of the workers. They take advantage of the repressive legislation to impose unbearable economic conditions. Their policy only results in growing stoppages and strikes.

In their utter helplessness, they now resort to production deadlocks and lockouts to bring pressure on the bureaucracy. This policy only leads to chaos and defeats the national objective of organising production to resist the invader.

### **Communist Party & National Production**

As against the policy pursued by the bureaucrats and the

industrialists, the Communist Party pursues a policy based on organising production for total national defence and resistance.

Recognising the vital role played by production the party declares that production can no longer be treated as the special concern of the profiteer or the bureaucracy. On the other hand, it has become the concern of the people whose very existence and freedom depend upon it. Popular national control over production exercised through a National Government enjoying the full confidence of the people is the basic demand of the hour.

To increase national resistance to the invader, it is necessary to increase and extend production. It is equally necessary to do away with the chaos in transport and industry, created by the bureaucracy's incompetence and utter disregard of the needs of national resistance.

To save production from growing dislocation, it is necessary to defeat the mad policy of the Government and industrialists which drives the workers to stoppages and strikes.

To protect the economic life against enemy attacks it is necessary to compel the Government to grant adequate production to workers and industrial plants; to evacuate plants and machinery from danger zone, to do everything possible to save every machine and plant.

To build production as a weapon of national resistance, it is imperative that problems of maintaining and expanding production should be solved through joint consultation among employers, Government and the workers. Organisation of workers councils in production units, their recognition in solving problem of production in avoiding waste is absolutely essential.

The outlook of the Party on production is a national outlook. It regards production, as a vital national duty which has to be performed to save the country from economic collapses, and strengthen resistance to the invader.

It is based on snatching the initiative, from the hands of the bureaucracy whose criminal policy threatens to undermine national resistance by creating economic chaos.

It is directed to meet the vital needs of our people who tomorrow will be bearing the brunt of Japanese attack. It is directed to sustain them in this fight for our country's freedom.

## **Producer—The Unifier Of The People**

In implementing this policy, the Party relies primarily on the working class which runs the entire production.

Thanks to the merciless exploitation, the working class today is not only indifferent to problems of increasing and organising production, it is hostile to it. So long as this hostility continues, production will be ruled by profiteers and the bureaucracy to the growing peril of our country. Production cannot and will not be run in any grave emergency, it cannot be expended so long as the producer does not stand by it.

The task of the Party, therefore, is to win over the working class to a national outlook on production. The workers must be inspired to look upon their daily job as a patriotic duty. They have to be made conscious of the fact that their labour is part of national labour to save the country. They have to be taught that it is their national duty to demand better production to expand it, to remove all obstacles created by profiteering owners, to demand consultation so that they can play a worthy part in the struggle against Fascist invaders. They alone can compel the Government and owners to move in the direction of the popular will.

Neither the Government nor the capitalists can resist this united pressure. Both are completely dependent upon the working class. Its powerful pressure, exercised to strengthen the nation's resisting capacity is bound to have its way.

Soon the working class will be called upon to perform acts of heroic patriotism. It will be its responsibility to keep railway communications intact in face of enemy bombing, to continue production in face of enemy attack, to transfer entire industry from one place to another to save the resisting capacity of the nation, to make every factory a centre of national resistance, every machine a weapon of national freedom.

Unless the deep patriotic instincts of the working class are roused to action, unless he is fired with the zeal to defend his country, unless he looks upon production as his patriotic duty the working class will prove unequal to the task, give way to panic and desert his post. The logic of bureaucracy's policy will assert itself.

The patriotic struggle of the working class to organise national production inevitably unites the people for common resistance to



the invaders. It is bound to draw in the entire people of our country who will soon understand that production must be kept up in their own interest; that it cannot be left in the hands of bureaucracy and the capitalists. The heroism of the working class in face of an enemy attack, will be a model of patriotic duty fulfilled and will inspire our countrymen to acts of greater heroism and courage.

By fulfilling its role as the patriotic producer, the working class directly unites and leads the people against the fascist invader. At no other time, was its role as a producer so directly linked with its political leadership. If he fails in one, he fails in the other.

Such is the vital importance of the Party's outlook on production.

### **Partial demands & Production**

Obviously the working class cannot be won over to this policy by mere propaganda and agitation. So long as production is synonymous with brutal exploitation, it will continue to regard it as slavery and drudgery and not as national duty.

As has been pointed out, the policy of the Party can be implemented only by defeating the policy pursued by profiteers and sanctioned by the Government.

Defence of partial demands of the working class is of paramount importance in the execution of our policy.

The interests of the working class cannot be surrendered to the capitalists in the name of war-production. Such a surrender is not only unjust and brutal but anti-national as it hits at the initiative of the workers to maintain and expand production.

Rights of organisation cannot be surrendered to the ordinance rule of the Government. On the other hand, more rights are required and have to be won if the working class is to lead in organising national production.

The working class can never surrender its right to strike nor will the Party ever consent to give up under any conditions.

The Party raises the following five demands as immediate demands of action :

- (a) Full compensation to meet the intolerable rise in the cost of living; adequate dearness allowance.
- (b) Immediate grant of bonus.
- (c) 25% rise in basic wage.

(d) Recognition of Trade Unions and full freedom to organise mill and factory committees in every plant and industry, to liquidate grievances and production problems.

(e) Limitation of profit in the interest of the people.

To neglect these demands is to ruin our production policy. To win them is to win over working class to play its role as a patriotic producer.

At the same time, it is not enough only to win partial demands. Every partial success must lead the workers to understand that their role as producers for the nation, for national resistance, must create a revolutionary consciousness towards their daily jobs. Defence of day to day interests is inseparable from our production policy.

### **Enforcement of Partial Demands & Strikes**

While on no accounts are we prepared to surrender the right to strike, yet it is our policy to minimise stoppages and strikes, consistently with the defence of the interests of the working class and the nation.

Minimisation of stoppages and defence of day-to-day demands is not mere phrase with us. The two are not contradictory. Pre-war experience is no guide in this respect.

Both the Government and the owners realise that to goad the working class under present conditions to organised action on a countrywide scale is to invite ruin for themselves. The working class has recently often compelled them to retreat before its united strength (attempt to enforce ten hours in Bombay). They are able to pursue their policy of reckless exploitation only in so far as they are not unitedly opposed.

The fear of united direct action forces both the Government and owners to seek compromise and settle disputes. That is why we take advantage of every machinery to settle dispute, conciliation courts and other machinery which we formerly accepted only under duress.

Our policy then is to seek settlement of disputes through negotiations backed by the united strength of workers and resort to direct action only when we are compelled to do so.

### **Our Tasks in the Trade-Union Field**

Our policy throws new responsibilities on our Trade Union work.

Our task is to mobilise the entire working class through the Trade Unions for our patriotic policy on production, for national popular control over production.

This means that the Trade Unions must develop the requisite strength to set in motion the workers in all industries to defend their daily interest. They must be in a position to mobilise the entire class and not merely advanced sections. They must, in particular, mobilise the workers in strategic industries, transport, iron and steel, coal mines.

Mobilisation of workers already organised by us is not enough. Our Trade Unions are weakest in strategic industries. Our working class base is weak in the threatened provinces.

The scope of the trade union work must immediately extend; it must extend to reformist trade unions; it must extend to strategic industries; it must extend to unorganised workers.

Our policy seeks to unite the entire class for the common task. The task cannot be achieved by splitting existing trade unions.

A systematic plan of trade union expansion embracing all sections alone meets the needs of the situation.

This also means a tremendous improvement in the day-to-day work of all trade unions. No more can we content ourselves with general agitation, as in the past. Every issue of trade union conflict has to be correctly understood, its importance correctly gauged in the light of our general policy. Facts and figures regarding cost of living, independent statistics, reasonable demands based on those must be the basis of our agitation. The tendency to put forward exaggerated demands making settlement difficult has to be avoided at all costs. Failure to justify the workers' case before courts must be regarded as a serious crime. It will force a strike on the workers through sheer incompetence of the leaders.

The tendency to neglect day-to-day work, quick despatch of grievances and substitute for it general political propaganda must be sharply attacked.

Our trade union agitation must be precise and concrete. Our trade union work must be perfect. Our trade union organisations must once more become the mass mobilisers—the leaders and organisers of the workers in the struggle for partial demands.

With our growing strength we have to lead the All-India Trade Union Congress towards our Policy. It is your weakness that en-

ables the T.U.C. to sit on the fence. To-day our production policy comes violently into clash with the policy pursued by blind patriots. In the name of creating deadlock they direct their attack against production and transport; they attempt sabotage, they exploit the economic grievances of the workers to bring about indefinite strikes; they sow panic among the workers; they seek to goad them into acts of violence and sabotage. They create a favourable soil for fifth-columnists.

In their mad frenzy, they not only disorganise production but also disrupt the organised strength of the working class.

This anti-national offensive against production has to be beaten back. This planned disruption of the working class ranks must be defeated.

The lesson of the last few days already show that the offensive could not succeed where strong ties bound the workers to their trade union organisations, where they had already earned the confidence of our workers as the champion of their daily interests.

This means that to protect the workers against this offensive on questions of economic demands, our T. U. organisations must not allow the initiative to pass into the hands of promoters of indefinite strikes or fifth-column provocators.

They must increase their general agitation a hundred fold to strengthen the confidence of the working class in its T. U. organisations and its Political Party, the C.P.I.

They must expose the tactics of indefinite strikes, as means of disruption, and positively ask the workers to fight against disunity. They must warn them against sabotage as the work of fifth-columnists. They must ask them to hold peace when they are on the streets.

And finally they must expose the entire game as an antinational campaign, ruining the nation and the workers.

To conclude, the production policy of the Party is of a piece with the political line of our Party.

The party fights the war as a war of national freedom. Production, therefore, is production for freedom. It is to be organised as national production. The working class must lead this battle for the people, for the nation. It must secure its vital demands as part of the general advance against imperialism, as part of national defence.

In this battle for production, the trade unions must come forward

as the mass mobilisers of the working class, enabling it to unify the entire people for national defence and national popular control over production for National Government and national freedom.

## **TASK OF THE STATE PEOPLES**

1. The dire peril of foreign invasion threatens the people of the Indian States exactly as it does our country as a whole. The path which they have to follow to defend their homes and hearths and to achieve freedom is also basically the same as the one for the rest of the country. Nothing short of a complete mobilisation of every section of the people in the States can enable them to-day to vanquish the Fascist enemy that may any moment break into their territory, particularly into the States of Orissa, Kerala, Assam and Hyderabad. In the States no less than in British India, united governments composed of all the patriotic parties in the State and commanding the devotion of all the sections of the people alone can lead the people to victory against the foreign invader. Neither the existing regimes in the States nor governments backed by some majority section or sections of the people can be equal to the task. The need of the States is the widest mobilisation of all parties and peoples on the basis of national defence for the immediate establishment of a united, all parties patriotic government in every State.

2. The common bond between the people of British India and the Indian states is to-day of stronger than ever before. Both are vitally interested in the defence of the territory of the other since in the event of foreign aggression, the strength and the weakness of each are going to be the strength and the weakness of other. The people of British India are therefore, most vitally interested in securing the establishment of genuinely patriotic governments in the states for the purpose of strengthening their defence in the same way as the people of Indian States ought to be interested in the establishment of a national government in India for strengthening the defence of the country as a whole. The struggle for people's unity in the States is, therefore, an integral part to the struggle for

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*Resolution passed by the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India on the 22nd September, 1942.*

uniting the whole of the Indian people for facing the aggressor that stands at the threshold of our country.

3. True to their reactionary and autocratic traditions, the rulers of Indian States continue their repressive policy unabated, completely oblivious of the ghastly calamity that threatens to overwhelm the States people together with British India. Every demand of the people for responsible government is suppressed with an iron hand. Civil liberties are non-existent. The food crisis is as acute and profiteering as rampant as elsewhere. In many States even open pro-Japanese propaganda, often indulged in by responsible State officials, goes unpunished. The policy of the Indian Princes of the issues of granting popular rights and organising defence is as criminal as that of the British Government and deserving of equal condemnation.

4. The question before the States people under the circumstances is neither one of giving up their demand and struggle for responsible government, nor of pursuing it in the old way. It is clear that the governments in the States today must have behind them the broadest and the most active support of the people. At the same time, the struggle for such governments has to be conducted within the framework of the task of rousing and uniting the states peoples for the task of national defence. And what is of the supremest importance at the moment is to realise that this task not only must but can be achieved today, for the dire necessity of defence creates the basis for building up a border people's unity and strength than what any other issue has done in the past. Given real people's unity based on communal harmony and the satisfaction of their vital economic needs, the securing of all-parties' patriotic governments in the Indian States is at this hour not more difficult but easier than it has ever been before.

5. The question before the States' people, therefore, is not of formally reasserting their adherence to the goal of responsible government and launching a campaign of sabotage or civil disobedience for its achievement. That course must destroy the means of our national defence, disrupt the people, create chaos and lead the people to ruin in the same way as in British India. The task of the States people is to focus their energies on forging the widest unity among themselves for achieving a patriotic all-parties's

government and shouldering their proper burden in the task of national defence. This alone is the real path that will take them both towards responsible government and successful defence, and not the one of formally declaring the goal of responsible government and launching a campaign of sabotage or mass civil disobedience for its achievement.

6. The extremely variegated conditions in the States require that within this broader framework, the specific tasks in each be worked out with great care and in minute details. The State of civil liberties in Indian States is generally even worse than in British India. The political consciousness and organisation of the people, on the other hand, are lower than in the latter. Mass organisations like Kisan Sabhas, T. U.s, Students' organisations, though well-developed in certain States, are also in most cases, non-existent or weak. The C. P. functions in still fewer states. Under these conditions, the necessity of defining the task of people's mobilisation for securing all-parties' patriotic governments in term of specific task suited to specific conditions in each State, is of vital importance. If this is not done, there is a danger of political workers in States sinking either into passivity and defeatism or unconsciously playing the role of disruptors and tools or provocators and playing into the hands of the State bureaucracy.

7. The Central tasks of the States peoples are these :

(a) Popularisation of the demand for a united, all-parties, patriotic government in each State, the establishment of civil liberties, release of political prisoners, the withdrawal of repressive measures and legislation and bans on States' Peoples' Conference where they exist. Mobilisation of the public behind these demands.

(b) Widespread mobilisation of the people, particularly, of the workers and the peasants behind the demand for effective control of food supplies and their supply at prices within the means of the poor, as also other important and day-to-day economic demands of the people.

(c) The organisation of anti-Japanese rallies and People's Defence Committees, especially in badly disturbed areas, and the threatened states.

(d) Organise an explanatory campaign for unity based on the demand for the release of the national leaders, stopping of repression,

lifting the ban on the Congress and for a Congress-League a agreement for the establishment of a Provisional National Government. The suicidal nature of the present struggle being carried on in British India and in some States also to be explained. The unity of the people of British India and States and their common interest in the matter of defence, as also the necessity of their struggling together for securing a national government in British India and all-parties' patriotic governments in Indian States. must be particularly stressed.

8. In the execution of these tasks, the endeavour must be to bring in every organisation with a mass basis, e. g., the Proja Mandal, Muslim League, T. U.s, Kisan Sabhas, Students's Unions, etc. Wherever sufficient civil liberties are available, mass meetings and processions must be organised for mobilising the people. Where that is not possible, propaganda will have to be carried on from house to house on the basis of a campaign of signatures, and civil liberties gradually widened out. In every situation, the issues chosen and the method followed for securing popular support must be such as would not play provocatively into the arms of the state bureaucracy and must be related to the state of civil liberties and the strength of people's organisations in the states concerned.

9. In States where the Proja Mandal of States People's Conference has launched civil disobedience or some other form of struggle subsequent to the arrest of the national leaders after 9th of August, special emphasis just be laid on explaining the suicidal nature of the struggle and on the task of isolating and exposing the Fifth Column elements attempting to exploit it for their ends. Even where no such struggle has been launched, the issue must still be explained to the people for preventing similar developments in such localities and States.

## **GREETINGS & MESSAGES**

### **Gratitude To Our Chinese Brothers**

**THE** Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party salutes all our Chinese brother Communists,

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*Sent by the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India at its September, 1942 sitting.*



your leader Mao Tse Tung, and Chu Teh, the Commander of the immortal Eighth Route Army. Through you we send our fraternal greetings to your great people who have been resisting the Japanese aggressor with the courage of unconquerable warriors, with the calm of an ancient civilised nation, with the confidence that comes out of fighting for the cause of justice and freedom.

Under the banner of freedom, for five long years your people have single-handed held the front against the Jap aggressor. That was not only your front but ours as well. While you defended your sacred soil, you kept the Jap militarists off our frontiers. Your epic National Resistance is the war of India's national defence as well. We take this opportunity to express our abiding gratitude to your people.

The Jap aggressors to-day are getting ready to launch a direct offensive against our nation and seize our beloved country. In this hour of trial, we Indian Communists, draw inspiration from your example. We are struggling to make our fellow-patriots and people see that national unity alone can be the spiritual strength for successful national resistance. The situation inside our country is as grave as it was inside yours on the eve of the Jap invasion. We are working for a United National Front to win National Government and together with the United Nations fight the Fascist aggressors for a free India in a free world. History has not only united in a common war the Chinese and Indian peoples but also placed on their shoulders the historic mission to liberate the whole of Asia through common struggle to-day. The harder we fight, the more we unite, the closer will come the day of certain victory.

### **Greetings To American Communists**

Red greetings to our American brother Communists from the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India.

Our country is in imminent peril of Japanese aggression. Our danger is also your danger, that is why your Government has sent American technicians and airmen to help to defend our country. Through you we greet your great people.

We look up to you not to let your people be confused by British imperialist propaganda but make them see the tragic situation in

India as self-evident home-truths. No foreign government can inspire the people it has kept and continues to keep enslaved to fight the aggressor. No irresponsible autocratic regime can unite the nation behind the armies at the front. This and nothing else is at the root of the tragedy that is being enacted in our land to-day.

If the Japs get India the British imperialists only lose their colony but we lose our Motherland and your people lose India's 400 millions to the Japs together with India's untapped rich resources to be used against your people, your defence and your freedom

### **Imperialists Started "Struggle"**

Don't let your people believe the imperialists lie that the National Congress began the trouble. The leadership of the Congress stood for settlement and not conflict. It is the British Government that struck the first blow and removed most of India's foremost leaders behind the bars. What imperialist propagandists call nation wide campaign of sabotage is the elemental outburst of an angry people left leaderless and destroying what they can lay their hands on in the spirit of blind patriotic revenge. Make your people realise that it is the policy of repression that is creating a patriotic mass basis for the real fifth-columnists, of Bose's Forward Bloc which during the last two years counted for nothing in the Indian national movement and stood isolated as a national disruptive and politically opportunist organisation. Terror against the Indian people is becoming a rich soil for the real Fifth-Columnists. They are reaping the harvest.

### **Reject Diehard Slander**

Don't let your people believe the diehard British Tory propaganda lie that the leadership of the Congress is unreliable or has gone over to the Japs. Nehru, Azad and most of the Congress leaders are as good and as great anti-Fascists as your own President. Gandhiji is pledged not to stand in the way of offering armed national resistance to the Fascist aggressors if the rest of the national leaders are satisfied that what the British Government has offered India is a real National Government which enables India's patriotic political leaders to rally the people to fight for their own freedom as well as as the freedom of the world. Make your people realise what every Indian knows that not one patriotic political

party or group is behind the insane policy of the British Government, all demand as All-Parties' National Government.

Our Party is launching a nationwide mass campaign for stopping repression by the Government, on the one hand, and sabotage of the country's defence by the misguided patriots on the other, for the release of the Congress leaders to negotiate with the British Government for an all Parties' National Government, for forging all-in national unity to make the demand for National Government irresistible, ending the era of Indian disunity, the last prop of the British imperialists to-day and the first step for the Fascists to get into our country. Our Party members have already saved India's production by successfully preventing stoppage of production and sabotage in most of the industrial centres. We are going all-out to save our nation, by relying on our own strength—national unity.

### **Our Cause Is Yours**

The primary responsibility of defending our Motherland, is of course, ours, of our fellow-patriots and of our entire people. We are endeavouring over very best to discharge the great debt we owe our ancient nation.

India's fate is directly linked with the fate of your own country, as it has never been before. If the Japs get India your own West coast would be the next target of Jap attack. We know when we will be defending our own borders we will be defending your shores, too. This is how we have a right to appeal to your people.

Rouse your people to rally to the support of every measure that is necessary for the successful defence of India, as if it were their own country. Make them realise how perilous is the situation in India. Get them to move your great President Roosevelt to press the British Government to immediately release the Congress leaders, recognise Indian freedom and implement it by agreeing to the establishment of an all-Parties' National Government. This alone can save the situation, win India for the Indians, and get for the united nations India's 400 millions fighting shoulder to shoulder as brothers-in-arms the battle of freedom—loving humanity in the spirit of our heroic Chinese neighbours. To help India tide over the existing national crisis is to help yourselves.

We appeal to your eloquent leader Browder to immediately

launch a national campaign for India, we expect every American Communist to put all his enthusiasm into it and win for it a response worthy of your great people so that the burning hatred of your President against the Fascist aggressors may become active aid to the Indian people, leading to the establishment of an Indian national defence.

### **Homage To Our Martyrs**

WE pay homage to those brave sons of our great people, the members and sympathisers of our Party who, in defiance of imperialist bullets, the fascists's knives and the rigours of underground work stood at their posts, held aloft the banner of the Party and gladly sacrificed their own lives so that our people may live and be free. We dip our banner to the memory of comrade Somen Chanda who was murdered by fascist thugs, to comrade Mohammed Haris of Calcutta whose death was hastened by hard underground life and continued police persecution, to comrade Umabhai of Ahmedabad who was killed by police bullets while trying to pacify the enraged crowds during the recent disturbances and to those other unnamed heroes of the working class who similarly sacrificed their lives in different parts of India. We are proud of these comrades who died at their posts serving their people and their class. With clenched fists, we salute them and promise them that we will work with unflinching determination and zeal to carry forward the proud heritage they left behind.

### **Salutations To Soviet Peoples And Stalin**

WE greet the heroic peoples of the Soviet Union fighting titanic battles upon which depends the fate of humanity. The Fascist imperialists led by Hitlerite Germany are fighting the battle for the imperialist, domination of the world. Your successful resistance is the rock on which their dreams of domination are being dashed to pieces. Our people owe a particular debt to you. By the superhuman resistance with which you are stopping the Hitlerite hordes at the gates of Stalingrad and at the foothills of the Caucasus, you have held them from bursting through to our country.

We mourn with you the loss of the brave fighters who have fallen in the struggles and the many millions of women and children who have suffered torture, outrage and atrocity at the

hands of Fascist beasts. We pledge to rouse our people to see that your unprecedented sufferings have saved our people from the same.

Your sacrifices are the sacrifices for all peoples of Europe in the West, of Asia in the East. Your strength has become the strength behind every struggling people. The indestructible unity of the different Soviet nationalities is inspiring every nation to forge and strengthen its own national Unity as the only foundation of successful struggle. Your death-defying spirit, fierce hatred of Fascism, and unbeatable patriotism is inspiring the patriots of all lands to emulate you.

In this world struggle against world Fascism, you lead the battle for world liberation.

Together with you in the battle of Indian defence, your defence and defence of all peoples against the axis aggressors! Together with you for Indian liberation and world liberation!

Long live the Red Army, the mightiest people's Army ever created!

Long live the Soviet peoples, the most united peoples the world ever saw!

For the unity of the peoples of the world!

Salutations to the great Stalin, who leads the battle, the battle of freedom-loving humanity!

In your footsteps, we shall follow!

### **Our Pledge To You Comrades Behind The Bars!**

The Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India sends its warmest fraternal greetings to all the comrades who are behind the bars or have yet to work underground.

We greet Comrade Bharadwaj, member of our Polit-Bureau who led the Communists inside the Congress, built our Party in the U. P. and created a Red fortress out of the Cawnpore working class. He is languishing to-day inside the Bareilly prison. Through him, we greet all our young U. P. comrades who are in the same jail or other jails, many of whom, in spite of their staunch loyalty to the Party, the bureaucracy refuses to recognise as Communists. Above all, we greet "CHACHA" JAN MOHAMED, aged worker-

Bolshevik who yet suffers under an insane life sentence for one single speech.

We greet Comrade DANGE, the most popular working class leader of Bombay and the founder of the mightiest Trade Union in Asia, the great Bombay Girmi Kamgar Union We greet Comrade BATLIWALA, one of our most popular national agitators. These two yet remain inside Yerawade prison.

We greet Comrade GHATE, founder member of our Party and its first General Secretary. He built our Party in the Southern Provinces. He is yet behind the jail walls of Vellore. Through him, we greet all our Tamil and Andhra comrades who are held in detention together with him.

We greet Comrade K. P. R. GOPALAN, whose life the people's mobilisation helped to save, but who is not yet free. We greet the four Kayyur comrades who face the gallows, whose mercy petition the Madras Governor has rejected. The last word on their fate yet lies with the Governor-General. Through the persons of those death-defying heroic comrades of ours, we send our greetings to all our Malayali comrades, prisoners, detenus and underground workers.

We greet over a hundred of our Punjab comrades headed by BABA GURU MUKH SINGH, the grand leader of Indian's revolutionaries and the hoary white Babas, SOHAN SINGH and RUR SINGH. They are mostly in Gujrat jail.

We greet the warriors of Chittagong Armoury Raid and other pre-reforms days prisoners and through them hundreds of our Bengal Comrades who are prisoners, detenus, externess or internees or have yet to suffer underground existence. We greet our comrades of Bihar, who are detained in Hazaribagh jail.

We greet the comrades-in-arms of Bhagat Singh, the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners—GAYA PRASAD, SHIV VERMA, JAIDEV KAPOOR and others, who have proved their revolutionary worth by coming over from terrorism to Communism, even while confined inside prison—walls away from the people's movement.

We greet all our comrades, unknown heroes of our people, who dedicated their young lives to fight fearlessly for the freedom of India and the whole world, whom a soulless and brainless alien bureaucracy yet keeps chained and caged and refuses to release

so that they may shed their young blood. defending our holy Motherland.

### **You Shall Rejoin Our Ranks!**

Comrades behind the bars! The first word does lie with the foreign government; that is why you are not yet by our side. But the last lies with word the people and that is our pledge to you that we will win you back in our ranks to rally the people you have served and led before, to fight for the defence and freedom of our ancient land.

Brothers torn away from the revolutionary brotherhood which is our Party! While we were in the midst of the mass campaign for your release and were winning greater and greater support of our fellow-patriots and the people, the alien government instead of releasing you and negotiating for a National Government with our national leaders, struck at the national movement itself, arrested the national leaders and has let loose a reign of terror. A new and perilous situation faces our country.

We have not forgotten you, how can we? We call upon you to realise how difficult and complicated the situation in our country is to-day. Black despair hangs over our fellow-patriots. The national movement is threatened with disruption from within and terror from without. The fate of our nation hangs in the balance.

But rest assured comrades that there is no despair and defeatism inside your Party. The bureaucracy in the last six weeks has rearrested several of our recently released comrades and many more, together with the Congress patriots. We are launching a nation wide campaign for the release of national leaders and negotiations for National Government. We pledge our word that we will put your release in its honoured place in our mass campaign. We are confident that we will win!

If we cannot rally the people, to win your release, we would be unworthy of being your comrades.

### **We Crusade For Unity We will Win!**

If we cannot make sense to our fellow-patriots and make them see that we have all to unite, to get the release of Indian's foremost national leaders and force an unwilling foreign government to

negotiate for National Government, we would be unworthy of our nation and then not freedom but fascism will be the destiny of our great country.

This is the burning realisation of every Communist. We pledge our all that every Party Member will work his hardest and best to turn the tide, to win you back in our midst, to win the national leaders back in their rightful place in our national movement to guide India's destiny through an all-parties National Government against the Japanese invaders, in alliance with the freedom-loving peoples of the United Nations.

We have unbounded faith in the sound patriotic instincts of our fellow-patriots. We have undying faith in the irresistible might of our 400 million-strong people. We will win! Bless our patriotic mobilisation and holy crusade for national unity and accept our Lal Salaams.

### **Red Greetings to British Communist Party**

WARM Red greetings from the Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India to our 50 thousand Communist brothers of the British Party. We are proud of the Fraternal duty you are discharging among your people, rallying the support of British Labour and progressives for India's national demand.

India is in imminent peril. We stand in danger of losing our country to the Fascist invaders. Our danger is also your danger. We know you realise this as well as we do, we appeal to you to make your realisation the common realisation of the British people as a whole, in the common interest of our two great peoples.

### **Awaken British People To The Peril**

Rouse the British people to realise as keenly as our people do that an alien Government cannot rouse the national patriotic spirit of our people to fight the fascist invaders to death, this, only India's national leaders heading an all-Parties National Government can do. Make them see that whatever the number of British troops the British Government is able to send to India, whatever the number of convoys bringing the best arms and latest equipment, they cannot successfully defend India without the active co-operation



of India's 400 millions which only the political leaders of our people can secure and guarantee. Churchill and his advisers are banking on a purely military defence of India and are bent on ignoring the political problems. It is the same bankrupt policy that lost Europe to the Fascists, it will work no other way in our country. Rally your people to make Churchill take back all that he said about his Indian policy in his latest speech in the House of Commons. To pursue that policy is to gamble with India's fate, at the cost not only of our people but of your people too, their hard labour, their beloved sons in the army.

### **Fight Imperialist Falsehood**

Tell the British people that the leadership of the National Congress stood for settlement with the British people and not conflict with the British Government. It is the British Government that struck the first blow, and has caused all the trouble. To ignore this would lead to calamitous results for the British and Indian peoples alike. To understand this is the first step towards uniting us both.

Tell the British people that it is the unparalleled blitz of repression that has driven unarmed patriots to acts of sabotage in the blind spirit of revenge.

Tell the British people that the policy of the British Government is creating a mass patriotic basis for the real Fifth-Columnists who used to count for nothing in the Indian national movement. Police repression is only helping to feed the real Fifth Columnists whose main slogan to-day is that the Japs could do no worse but will deal with us better.

Tell the British people that no patriotic Indian political Party or group supports the British Government, or its policy of repression and all demand National Government.

Tell the British people that to try to crush the Congress is to make the vain attempt to crush Indian nationalism. In the perilous situation of to-day it is to destroy India's national will to resist the Fascist aggressors.

Tell the British people that to settle with the Indian people, release of Congress leaders and negotiations with them are necessary as it would have been to get your T.U.C. and Labour Party inside

the Government to make it national, to mobilise your own people behind Britain's war-effort. There is no getting round this fundamental fact, in your interests as well as ours.

### **We Weather The Storm—We Fight to Unite**

Tell the British people that your brother Party in India is launching a nation-wide campaign to unite all Parties and rally all patriots, for stopping repression by the Government and sabotage by misguided patriots, for securing the release of national leaders, for forging all-in national unity so that United National India may negotiate with the United Nations for the immediate establishment of National Government in our country, pledged to rally India's millions in a free and equal partnership in the Grand Alliance of the freedom-loving nations.

We know this is the only way to save our country. Make the British people realise how this helps them too. Tell them how this is the only path for uniting our two great peoples.

Tell British Labour that our Party has been able to retain its leadership over the India working class and has saved the majority of industrial centres from stoppage and sabotage while our trusted central leaders like Dange, Bharadwaj, Batliwala, Ghate and others with hundreds of our local leaders were never released from detention and hundreds more have been arrested for daring, to stand between the people and the police and for asking angry crowds to protest peacefully against repression.

Tell every one of our British Comrades that no Indian Communist will know any rest till national unity has been realised, our national leaders released, National Government won and our people fight the Fascist enslavers shoulder to shoulder with your people for our freedom as well as yours, ending for ever the era of the enslavement of our nation by your ruling class. Rest assured, brothers that our Party will fight to its last member against the Jap Fascists who threaten our fair land.

### **Our Need Is Yours Too**

Rouse your people to realise how desperate is the situation in India, how urgent the need to end the present deadlock, which helps neither your nation nor ours but only the Fascists. Your people in

their own interest, and our people in our own interest, will have to ultimately unite in the common struggle against the Fascist aggressors, why not unite right away, that will guarantee that there will be no Burma in any Indian province, no useless suffering for your soldier-sons, less sacrifices for your workingmen. Make every honest son of the British people regard Indian freedom as if it were the freedom of Britain itself. If the Japs get us they get us at your cost. If your people can get your rulers to release our people you get India's 400 millions against the Japs for deathless heroism in the common anti-Fascist struggle, inside the common freedom front for common victory of humanity against barbarism, of freedom against slavery. Let you from there, and we from here do our patriotic duty by our own peoples and tirelessly work for their unity. We shall win!

## **ALL TOGETHER—FOR RELEASE OF GANDHIJI TO END NATIONAL CRISIS :**

*Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India at its Enlarged Plenum Session, February 10-24, 1943.*

A situation of the utmost gravity faces our people to-day. The reckless act of the bureaucracy on August 9, drove the vast masses of our patriots away from the path of National Defence. The treacherous Fifth Column sought shelter in the bosom of patriotism. The conflict between the Government and the people aggravated every problem in the land. Economic dislocation and crisis deepened into a crisis of the barest necessities of life of the people, of food itself.

Starvation and famine face the nation at a time when the ruthless Jap invader is at our doors.

**Now Or Never!**

No longer could the nation's leaders behind prison bars continue to be helpless witnesses to this disaster. Gandhiji's fast is a desperate call to the entire nation to wake up before it is too late and unite to save itself from utter extinction.

The same hands that locked the jail gates on the nation's leaders on August 9, refuse to unlock them now. The life of the nation's foremost leader is in peril. His call for settlement, the only way out, is spurned.

The crisis deepened a hundredfold.

It is "Now or never" for our entire nation. We either get Gandhiji out and, solve the crisis; or we sink in it deeper still irrevocably, and helplessly get carried on by it from the arms of one enslaver into those of another.

Whether we can get Gandhiji out or not to-day—on this depends whether our entire nation passes from crisis to salvation or to death.

### **A Rebuff To Slanders**

Gandhiji's statements have swept away every obstacle, every prejudice, that stands in the way of our great patriotic Parties uniting among themselves and with the peoples of the United Nations.

He has answered back all the slanders hurled against our national movement by the bureaucracy and has reaffirmed the staunch anti-Fascist stand of the Congress. He has categorically disowned sabotage and anarchy on behalf of the Congress. He has revealed that the Congress was on the eve of new negotiations with the League prior to August 9; he has indicated the Viceroy for blocking, Rajaji's efforts to interview him after his talks with Jinnah.

He has opened the door wide for settlement with the League, for united negotiations with the Government.

### **Viceroy's Challenge**

The Viceroy's "No" to Gandhiji shows the length to which wooden-headed reaction can go. They don't want settlement with the Indian people; they want our downright surrender.

Every patriotic Party, every patriot should wake up and see where this policy leads our nation. The Viceroy's "No" to Gandhiji is not mere private quarrel between the Congress and the Government. It is an ultimatum delivered to every patriotic party, to our entire nation—either surrender or nothing

Accentuation of the misguided struggle against the means of our National Defence; new lease of life to the Fifth Column just at a time when its whole political basis has been knocked of clean by Gandhiji's statements; depending of the food crisis into famine and

food riots—this is what awaits our nation if the Viceroy's "No" is allowed to stand.

India's gates would be left wide open and the Jap invaders could walk in any time it suited them.

### **Bureaucracy On Last Legs**

The glorious traditions of our patriotic national parties—the sound patriotic instincts of our great people, cannot look on in passivity and silence before this shameful prospect. Out of this very prospect itself, out of the present diehard stand of the Viceroy has opened out the biggest opportunity for our nation.

Never before has the reactionary bureaucracy isolates itself so completely from every section of Indian public opinion, from every section of International public opinion. All the slanders of Amery and Co., against the Indian people, fabricated to isolate them from their International allies, are being blown up. All the barriers of misunderstanding and prejudice between the Congress and the League are being removed.

The movement for the immediate and unconditional release of Gandhiji as the only way of ending the crisis has already begun to sweep all over the land. All patriotic organizations and associations are coming into it. From the threatened province of Bengal has come the most inspiring example of a united lead—the demand of the Bengal Legislative Assembly for Gandhiji's release, a demand supported by all parties including the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. The coming Delhi Conference should rally the biggest mobilisation of united Indian public opinion.

### **Unite To Stop Sabotage**

At this critical hour in the destiny of our beloved Motherland, the Communist Party appeals to every patriotic brother Party, to every patriotic son and daughter of India.

All unite and win Gandhiji's release to end the crisis! In the name of Gandhiji, stop sabotage and smash the Fifth Column!

We appeal to all our brother Congress patriots. From behind prison bars, Gandhiji has disowned sabotage and anarchy; he has given the call for unity with the League. In the sacred name of the Congress, in the name of Congress-League unity, stop sabotage and anarchy, smash the Fifth Column which has been running amuck with the Congress banner the last six months. This is the way you

can act as true soldiers of the Congress, this is the way you can get the League to join you in winning Gandhiji's release.

### **Call To League Patriots**

We appeal to all our brother League patriots. On your shoulders rests the biggest responsibility today. There are now few barriers of prejudice or misunderstanding left between you and the Congress. Gandhiji has disowned the campaign of sabotage and anarchy, he has stretched out on behalf of the Congress his hand of friendship towards you through the prison bars.

Nothing but these bars stand between you and your great brother Party; between you and National Government which you so ardently desire and urgently need; between you and the satisfaction of your just demand for self-determination. The Viceroy has already said "No" to this just demand of yours.

### **For Self-Determination**

The Viceroy demands surrender of the Congress. To tolerate this demand is to help the bureaucracy to crush the biggest brother party of yours in the country through which alone you can realise your right of Self-determination.

To tolerate this in to allow the bureaucracy to smash all Parties after smashing the Congress.

The Viceroy has turned down even Gandhiji's proposal to consult the Congress Working Committee members. To allow the Viceroy's policy to stand, to allow the Congress call to you to go unheeded, is to miss your biggest chance of winning freedom for the Muslim masses and salvation for all. In the name of the Muslim masses of the threatened provinces, in the name of the traditions and aspirations of your own great organisation, throw in your entire weight to get Gandhiji out.

### **Forward All !**

We appeal to the Hindu Mahasabha patriots, to every one of our brother patriots throughout the length and breadth of India, to unite with each other and win Gandhiji's release and end the crisis. We appeal to the working class, kisan and student organisations to rally behind the campaign for Gandhiji's release and to isolate those who try to exploit Gandhiji's fast for creating anarchy. One simple step forward and we force the bureaucracy to bend and save our entire

nation from untold disaster. To fail to take this simple step means death and destruction for all.

All together demand Gandhiji's release!

Forward to National Unity to win National Government for National Defence and Freedom !

## **THE FOOD CRISIS AND OUR TASKS :**

*Resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India at its Plenum Session on 19th February, 1943.*

1 The food crisis which has engulfed the whole country aggravates a hundred-fold the perilous situation precipitated by the arrest of the national leaders and the suppression of the Congress since August last. Prices of food grains have not only risen to such dizzy heights as 200% above the pre-war level, but what is a far greater calamity, food has virtually vanished from the open market altogether. Starvation, famine and pestilence stare the Indian people in the face. The situation is rapidly drifting towards food riots on a countrywide scale.

### **The Root Cause**

2. The root cause of this nation wide starvation is nothing else but the bankrupt economic policy of the imperialist government which has intensified the exploitation of the people during the war and has permitted unbridled profiteering by the monopoly capitalist and trader. Government alone is basically responsible for the vast hoarding of food grains which has led to their virtual disappearance from the market and mass starvation.

The food crisis that broke out in such a violent form in December and now threatens to lead to the most serious political consequences was maturing for a whole year prior to its violent outburst.

Since the declaration of war by Japan and particularly after the occupation of Burma, British Imperialism, far from seeking the co-operation of Indian industries and the national movement in the interests of national defence, has still further intensified the economic exploitation and the political repression already prevalent in the country.

It was this policy that led to the national crisis in August. It is the same policy that has now led to the food crisis

Though the bureaucracy has never done anything effective to prevent black-marketing, since after Japan's entry into the war, it has attempted more and more to secure grain supplies directly

from the peasantry by passing the normal trader in grain. Both the military authorities and the U.K.C.C. have purchased grain in large quantities independently of the normal channels of trade and without consideration for popular needs. Government have also adopted coercive methods to secure grain from the people and adopted what have been simultaneously the most chaotic and the most harmful measures for getting control over food supplies. In retaliation many grain traders and particularly monopolists, have turned hoarders and withdrawn vast quantities of grain from the market, while exasperated masses of the people have taken to rioting and disorder.

The August crisis has still further worsened the situation both on account of the anarchy and general insecurity it has created and due to the scope it has given to hoarders as also to those who want to incite the people to rioting and disorder, to exploit the food crisis for their selfish and criminal ends. It is the national crisis which permits of bread riots being glorified as a "revolutionary struggle for independence" and hoarding en masse as a patriotic duty.

Most dangerous attempts have been made by pro-"struggle" elements among Congressmen, and often by Fifth Columnists to exploit the food situation for leading the country to civil war and complete social disruption. Such a development of food crisis today can only lead to utter anarchy in the country and thus offer the best opportunity to the bureaucracy to crush the last remnants of morale still existent in the people. Such a development must also obviously help the Fifth Columnist and the Japanese invader.

Thus the extreme intensification of the national crisis is leading the country to complete ruination.

## **Two Alternatives**

3. In this situation, to leave the initiative in the hands of imperialism, is to allow the food crisis to develop into riots and lootings and to throw open the gates of our country to Fascist and Jap invasion. On the other hand, to unite the people and all the patriotic parties and organisations in a people's campaign for food, to force the bureaucracy to really and effectively control prices and stocks so that necessities of life would be available at prices within the reach of the people, and to ensure equitable distribution, is to solve not only the food crisis but to move forward towards the solution of the national crisis as well



## **Our Solution**

4. The first prerequisite of a satisfactory solution of the food crisis is that all stocks of grain meant for trade must be stored in public godowns and that the prices of food-stuffs must be brought down to the purchasing power of the ordinary consumer. This public storage of food alone can completely eliminate vanishing of food-stuffs and black-marketing. Further, the peasant must be assured a reasonable price for his produce. A popular solution of the food problem cannot eliminate the honest trader. He will have to be protected from the clutches of the monopolist grain hoarder, and a reasonable rate of profit ensured to him.

Finally, these prerequisites cannot be satisfied without complete people's sanction behind them. That is why it is necessary both in rural and urban areas to have people's food committees representative of all sections and parties of the people and secure recognition for them from the Government for the control of supply and regulation of prices.

It is also clear that only a National Government can solve the food problem on a national scale. Through the food crisis the Government is ruining the entire nation both economically and politically. The same national unity and National Government that are necessary for the solution of the political crisis are therefore necessary for solving the food crisis as well.

## **Food Campaign**

5. The Communist Party has not only put down the solution on paper, it has given an active lead to put it into practice. Wherever the food question has become acute, the Communist Party has taken the initiative to forge the unity of the people bringing together men of all organisations into Joint People's Food Committees.

In many places, the bureaucracy has been forced by the pressure of people's unity to import food and have it distributed to the local population at control prices. In other places, the officials opened more licensed shops for the distribution of food imported by them under popular pressure.

People's Food Committees and Food Volunteers have in many cases unearthed big hoards, stopped illicit export of grain by profiteers and have forced the officials to sell the goods so seized to the public at controlled prices.

It certain places where the Food Committees have secured stocks of sugar, kerosene, they have successfully organised rationing under popular control.

In big cities like Bombay, Food Volunteers have been organised who kept order in the long queues before Government Grain Shops and exposed the corruption, police high-handedness and prevented the breaking out of riots when the rush in the queues was the greatest.

In certain cases, Party initiative and intervention has resulted in stopping altogether or checking the spread of food riots.

Such in the main have been the results of the activities and the intervention of the Food Committees and Food Volunteers formed under the Party's initiative.

### **Achievements**

6. The principal achievement of our activities on the Food Front has been that wherever we have intervened we have demonstrated in practice that all-in unity for food can be forged and that on the strength of united people's action, food can be got, that bureaucracy can be forced to produce stocks and control prices and hoarders unmasked and isolated.

We have shown how food riots are no remedy, and on the other hand, they are a disaster to be checked or prevented on the strength of people's unity. We have thus smashed the game of the Fifth Column and isolated his wherever we have fought against food riots.

We have shown how the small trader and retailer has to and can be won over so that the people's Food Committees, reinforced by the traders, will not only be able to get stocks but start rationing and distribution through normal trade channels.

### **Failings**

7. The main failing of our food campaign was that we intervened on the food front sporadically and piecemeal. As in the case of our activity on other fronts, we followed the typical spontaneity pattern.

Firstly, we took up considerable time to get going on the food front. We began intervening when the situation had already reached a breaking point. We trailed behind events.

Secondly, we tackled whatever aspect of it came before our nose and remained sticking to it. It was food queues in one place, the fight for mill grain shops in another, the getting and rationing of sugar and kerosene stocks in a third.

Thirdly, therefore, we tackled the whole problem in typically economist fashion, running it as a partial demands campaign. We failed to realise that our intervention on the food front was on a par with our intervention in the events after August 9. In short we failed to grasp that the food crisis was an extension of the national crisis to food and that the fight for food was closely linked agitational as well as organisationally with the fight against the Fifth Column (riot-provokers) and with the fight for national unity, national defence and National Government.

Fourthly, this political weakness has led to our failure to form stable Food Committees having active vigilance and continued mass support. In fact, the building of people's unity behind food and Food Committees in localities is the most concrete form of building national unity for defence and freedom.

Fifthly, our agitation often tended to become merely a denunciation of the bureaucracy and the hoarders. On the one hand, we failed to warn the people how the policy of the bureaucracy was leading to food riots and social disruption and thus paving the way for the Japs; on the other hand, we failed to drive home how unity over food must lead to unity for defence and National Government through which alone the problem can be permanently solved.

## **Tasks**

8. On the basis of a review of the achievements and failings of the food campaign run by us, we can now formulate our tasks and slogans for immediate future. It must be clearly grasped that the food crisis is by no means over. It is bound to worsen until the National Government is won. What has been done so far is that temporary relief has been obtained, the confidence generated among the people in places where we have worked that through united action food can be got. Our job now is to consolidate and extend the advance made to pass on from food agitation and organisation of food conferences and stable People's Food Committees, from unity for food to unity for National Defence and National Government.

Our main tasks are as follows :—

(a) People's Food Committee representing all patriotic and popular organisations and people's volunteer brigades—these are the cornerstones of organisation on the food front and they must be organised on the basis of mohollas in towns and villages.

(b) The Volunteer Corps are the strong arm of the People's Food Committees. They are indispensable for queue work, for educating popular opinion, on controlled prices, for keeping popular watch on the hoarder, for unearthing stocks and for preventing rioting and loot, and protecting the people.

(c) More grainshops and supplies, better distribution of grain, effective price control, tracking down secret hoards, recognition for food committees as bodies which control and supervise over supplies, distribution, and prices—these must be the demands and tasks of the Food Committees.

(d) To consolidate and extend the work done by us on the food front in any given district or town, we should organise food conferences. These should be preceded by real mass agitation and should bring together the widest sections of the people and the greatest number of political parties. Such conferences will create popular sanction behind the food committees set up by them.

(e) Tenacious and vigorous efforts must be made to draw in the trader and particularly the small trader into the food campaign. He must be made to realise the re-starting of trade is possible only through the work and pressure of the people's Food Committees. We must make every effort to draw him into the same.

(f) Wherever the millowners or workshop management have opened grain-shops in the mill, we should demand their control and supervision through joint committees. At the same time, efforts must be made to get traders in working-class localities to join the People's Food Committees and to agree to sell grain at controlled prices so that the Government can be pressed to use him as a distributing agency.

(g) The main planks of the food campaign in the rural areas must be: the peasant should be able to retain minimum quantity of grain necessary for the maintenance of his family and himself, surplus grain to be sold through People's Food Committees to ensure the peasant a reasonable minimum price organisation of "Grow More Food Campaign", strengthening of the Kisan Sabha. The main demands of the "Grow More Food" should be: cultivable wasteland to the rural poor for tillage at nominal rates, tagavi loans, cheap irrigation facilities and supplies of manure and moratorium on rents and debts (including those of the co-operative societies) free use of forest for grazing cattle, and also freedom from attachment, during the war.

## **From Food To Freedom**

9. It is the responsibility of the Party to take the initiative to solve the food crisis by performing these tasks. As in the case of the national crisis, either the Party is able to come forward and forge people's unity for getting food, and fight disruption and Fifth Column activity which is coming in through the food crisis end, or the initiative is left in the hands of the bureaucracy to gamble with the fate of the nation, to intensify the national crisis and to open the door for Jap invasion. The capacity of the Party to intervene in the food crisis effectively, to run a rousing campaign drawing in thousands in country wide food conferences, to forge mass sanctions behind food committees so that they get effective control over supplies and prices, is really the test of the capacity of the Party to lead the people towards the solution of the national crisis and for the winning of National Government through which alone the problem of food as of defence can be effectively solved.

### **ON PARTY FINANCES :**

*Resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India at Bombay on February 23, 1943.*

STARTING with cash of Rs. 13,000 and a stock of books, machinery and newsprint worth Rs. 5,500 at the time of legalisation we issued a call for Rs. 30,000 for 'People's War', our organ. We realised Rs. 31,000. We had Rs. 6,500 in regular donations from August 1942, until the end of January 1943, and special donations to the extent of Rs. 29,000.

To the call of the 2 Lakh Fund issued by our September Central Committee Plenum, the people gave us 5 lakhs of rupees including the promises. The actual cash realised is Rs. 3,50,900 and the promises pending are Rs. 1,50,000. All provinces overfulfilled their quotas except Punjab, but it paid off the Centre's of share of Rs. 15,000. Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Orissa and Gujerat made a combined drive of their P.C. and D.C fund along with the 2 Lakh Fund. The three provinces which reached the figure of a lakh and more are Andhra (which has yet to collect promises of a lakh of rupees), Kerala (which included Com. E.M.S. Namboodripad's contribution of Rs 50,000) and Bengal (which includes Rs. 20,000 for the D.C. funds and 17,000 for their Daily).

The Centre's share has come to about Rs. 1,80,000.

With this, total realisation comes to Rs. 2,65,000. The Party expenses during this period was Rs. 21,000. Money spent on

machinery and equipment of Rs. 30,000. To-day we have a paper stock worth 2 lakhs of rupees including the orders we have placed. This leaves us barely a cash balance of Rs. 15,000.

### **Party Budget**

The Centre has got a monthly expenditure of Rs. 5,000 for which there is a regular income of Rs. 2,500 only. Further, we will have to continue buying newsprint on the black market at fabulous rates.

Thus, though the Centre finances are for the next few months stabilised we still face an anxious period, with no reserve Party fund left to fall back on.

The financial position of the Provinces is still worse. All the provinces which are bringing out their provincial organs have neglected to stock sufficient newsprint. Except Andhra, Tamilnad, and Malabar, no province has made an estimate of their expenditure and income including their D.Cs. in a planned way to meet growing needs of our expanding Party. If this is done, the expenses which today are about Rs. 50,000 per month, would go to one lakh of rupees per month.

### **Importance of a Regular Party Fund**

The Central Committee has functioned on the basis of a stable party Fund. The Provincial Committee realised the importance and the absolute necessity of a Party Fund only during the imperialist phase of the war. This realisation is yet formal even in P.Cs. and this has not yet become common among the entire ranks of our Party. The necessity of a regular Party Fund with each Party unit (the lowest unit at present which is permitted to have a Party fund is the D.C.) is not yet realised. This is shown in the way the D.Cs. live from hand to mouth and in the way the D.Cs. look at their portion of the 2 Lakh Fund as a windfall which will keep them from bothering about finances for the next few months.

This non-realisation of the importance of a regular Party Fund from the D.C. unit upwards, means no realisation among our ranks that no expansion of Party membership, no mass campaigns and no training of the membership is possible without a stable P. Fund behind the C.C. and each P.C. and D.C. We will not be carrying out the urgent tasks that face us without a regular Party Fund with each D.C.

**Therefore, the Central Committee decides that :**

1. Every D.C. and P.C. must stabilise its income by May day.

Stabilisation does not mean restricting of our activity to our present income, but increasing our income to meet the increased organisational needs and expenses of every unit

2. Every whole timer must be paid a minimum basic wage of Rs. 15/- per month. City and dearness allowances, and reasonable provision for his family shall also have to be met by the Party. No person can live and carry on work on less than Rs. 15/- without sponging on the people in one form or another. The carelessness and the negligence which at present is common towards the physical needs of our cadres must end. "There is nothing more valuable than cadre—cadres decide everything" (Stalin). To neglect cadre and allow them to become physical wrecks, is to disrupt our whole Party.

3. Every D.C. and P.C. should review its account from legality upto December and frame financial rules by May Day.

4. The C.C. should study the financial position of all P.Cs and frame financial rules by May Day.

5. To stabilise D.C. and P.C. incomes every cell must collect :

(a) From every Party member a monthly subscription of Rs. 2 as, which in the case of Kisan Party members can be collected once a quarter or once a year.

(b) Fix up levies for Party Members. In fixing the amount of levy, one must bear in mind that it is voluntarily agreed to by the Party member concerned and secondly his capacity to pay it after deducting all his reasonable expenses. Levy is a voluntary contribution which every Party member agrees to pay out of his own income.

(c) Have a ring of donors around each cell. Fix the number of donors and the amount of donations to be collected Each cell.

(d) Stabilise and increase the number of donors for the P.C.

### **Five lakh fund**

Without fulfilling of these tasks, and without having a stable Party Fund for each D.C. units and above, and without having planned monthly budgets all round, no planning of organisation is possible and no expansion of our Party and no mass campaign is possible.

A Reserve Party Fund for the P.Centre of 5 lakhs will have to be created by November Day without which there is no financial stability for the Party. And the only way to give this call for a 5 Lakh Fund from the party Convention is to carry out the tasks outlined above.

## **BRITISH COMMUNISTS PLEDGE SUPPORT : WIN GANDHI'S RELEASE**

Comrade Harry Pollitt, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain has sent the following cable to Comrade P. C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India :

“On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, I assure the warmest solidarity and support to your campaign in this grave crisis of India, to secure the release of Mahatma Gandhi and establish National Unity and win National Government for the defence and freedom of your country.

We are conducting a campaign to press the British Government here, and the Viceroy, immediately to release Gandhiji and open negotiations with the Indian leaders of all political sections with a view to effect a united settlement in the interests of the United Nations.”



## ANDHRA RESOLUTION ON WHOLE-TIMERS

Below we print the resolution on party Whole-timers passed by the Andhra P.C. at its recent session of January 1943.

Our central slogans today are the building up of mass organisations and a mass Communist Party. This means a big expansion of Party functionaries and Party whole-timers. Without such functionaries and such whole-timers, no mass party can be built up, no mass organisations can be built up.

If this expansion of Party whole-timers is to be an organised, planned, expansion, if working class and kisan militants have to be raised to become Party whole-timers (either as Party functionaries or as builders of mass organisations), then the proper selection of whole-timers and a proper attitude towards them is urgently necessary.

In Andhra, of course, where the tradition of giving away all property to the Party has become widespread among Party ranks the approach of the P.C. towards the problem of whole-timers has been one of caution : "Not every one who gives all his property to the Party can become a whole-timer". This approach, of course, cannot be copied by other provinces where such conditions do not exist and where the central need is for raising more Party whole-timers. Don't copy the approach of the resolution, learn from its content.

What you will learn from the resolution is : Responsibilities of a Party whole-timer; responsibilities of the Party Committees towards the Party whole-timers general directions for selecting whole-timer. The resolution should help you to orient your understanding in a new way towards the question of Party and mass organisation.

After the meeting of Party organisers held in October, 1942, there has come a new revolutionary consciousness in our Party members. That consciousness is that they should give away all their

property to the Party and become whole-time Party workers. This is certainly the opening of a new chapter in the history of our Party. P.C. welcomes this new consciousness at a time like this when we have to face a political crisis in our country and when we have to defend our Motherland from the Fascist aggressor. In this stage, if we fail to utilise this new revolutionary consciousness and spirit of self-sacrifice of our Party Members, we will be doing a great harm to the development of our Party. But at the same time, those Party members should also realise the tremendous responsibilities of a Party whole-timer. Then only will this consciousness make them real Bolshevik Party workers. Otherwise this emotional enthusiasm will lead him to a 'romantic' idea of being a Party whole-timer and ultimately he will only become a problem to the Party itself. Therefore, it is necessary to specify the responsibility of a whole-timer toward the Party and the party's responsibility towards a whole-timer.

### **Points to remember when we Take a Comrade as a Whole-timer**

A party Member, by the mere fact that he has given all his property to the Party, does not become entitled to be taken as whole time Party worker. It is the Party that has to decide whether a comrade can be taken as a whole-timer on Party wage or not. The District Committees would take the following points into consideration before they take any comrade as a party whole-timer.

1. What is the level of his political consciousness and what are his capacities!
2. What is the work he would be given and the necessity of that work.
3. How much is he interested in doing that job and what is his capacity to do it.
4. Whether he is better fit to do that job than the other comrades in that locality.
5. Whether he has that capacity to develop himself both politically and organisationally while doing the job.

The District Committee should make the following points clear to those comrades who has prepared to give all their property and who possess the above qualifications.

- (a) Even though he has given his all to the Party, the District Committee alone will decide whether he could be taken as a whole-

timer or not. That will depend on his capacities and the necessity of taking him as a whole-timer.

(b) Before he gives his property to the Party, he should first make a decent provision for his family (i.e. his mother, wife, and children). After this, if he has still anything left as his share, he should give it to the Party.

(c) These comrades who get Rs. 250/- or less per year should not sell and give their property to the Party.

### **Responsibilities of a Whole-timer**

1 He should not have the conception that party committees are responsible for his monthly wage and that Party committees are paymasters of the whole-timers. From the total collections the Party whole-timers make for the Party funds, they will be allowed to spend a fixed amount of money and that they have to take through the Party committees, for their personal expenses. It is this conception that should animate a whole-timer. When a whole-timer has this conception then only will be realised that the more Party funds he collects, the more regularly will the Party committee be able to discharge its responsibilities and pay Party wages regularly.

2 He should be animated with the consciousness that he should develop more and more, daily through carrying out the present jobs and be capable of taking additional responsibilities and thus be worthy of being a whole-timer on the Party wage. Moreover, he must realise that if he fails to do his jobs well, and to develop, it becomes the duty of the Party committee to remove him as whole-timer on Party wage. He must realise that a Party Committee that does not do this and take another capable comrade in his place is not carrying out its duty and is hampering the development of the Party. When he realises this, he will welcome the decision of the Party.

3 Party whole-timers should not only go on developing themselves politically, but should also realise and correct their short-comings in their personal life, and try to lead an exemplary life. His relations with his family and others should be communist relations. He should try to be a model, efficient and good worker on every front. The Party committees should also see that every whole-timer does his job well and develops like that. Only then will our party develop and many more comrades will become whole-timers.

## **Responsibilities of Party**

1 As far as possible the Party should give the wages of whole-timers in time

2 The party should make special arrangements for the constant political development of whole-timers

3 The Party should also see that every whole-timer develops himself to lead a model life His mistakes and defects should be pointed out and he should be given suggestions to correct himself and develop The Party should treat them as equal members of one revolutionary family Their mistakes should be pointed out to correct them and develop them, but not for mere fault finding The Party Committee should take care that in pointing out the mistakes we do not do it in such a way as to discourage or dishearten them

4 The responsibility of developing the wives and children of the whole-timers politically and looking to their financial needs is also on the Party Every Party Committee should realise this and fulfil this responsibility in the best way possible in the given situation

The whole-timer should feel that the Party is sparing no efforts in performing its duty towards him Every whole-timer doing his duty means that the Party itself is fulfilling its responsibilities towards the whole-timers When every whole-timer is conscious of this, then there will be no room for the false notion that he is separate from the Party and the party is something separate from him They will realise that the meaning of the Party carrying out its responsibilities, is the Party members, and especially the whole-timers, fulfilling their individual responsibilities

## **Future Programme**

1 When any comrade is being taken as a Party whole-timer the respective District Committee should bear in mind all the above factors They should first get the approval of the Provincial Committee before anybody is taken on the Party wage

2 Party wages to the whole-timers should be the same all over the Province Each whole-timer will be given Rs 15/- per month as the basic Party wage If he lives in a town he will get an allowance of Rs 5/-extra Allowance for his wife if she is in a village is Rs 5/- and if she is in town Rs 10/- every month Allowance for his children is for each child Rs 5/- upto a maximum of Rs 10/- per month If he has to do any travelling, that travelling allowance will be given separately In case he falls ill, and needs special medical help, special allowance for that will also be given

## CONGRESS & LEAGUE PATRIOTS : YOU—CAN TURN THE TIDE ! MAY DAY MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

"For a whole generation May Day was a day when the worker fortified his faith in his own strength and felt himself at one with the millions of his class brothers, a day when he felt conscious of belonging to a mighty militant body. The significance of this May Day is incomparably greater. This year it is a day of rallying all people, of uniting all honest men who cherish freedom for the struggle in defence of their decent existence for the sacred liberation war against fascism, for the cause of all mankind. On this day the sense of human dignity, courage and determination of every fighter must overcome all apprehensions. The magnificence of the common task must relegate to the background all petty egoistic motives. Unity of all progressive and freedom-loving forces must lead to the supreme determination to act."

--From May Day Manifesto of the  
Communist International (1942)

May Day 1943 falls in the midst of the most decisive turning point in world-history

The Fascist dogs are on the run, beaten by the heroic Red Army and the forces of the United Nations. The Nazi forces stand decimated, their morale shattered down every day.

The would-be conquerors of the world, the Hitler-Tojo-Mussolini gang are eating the dust.

*The path is being opened for the liberation of the whole world*

Only last year the world stood on the brink of disaster. Japan had conquered Java, Sumatra, Malaya and Burma and stood at the gates of India carrying on her campaign of pillage and plunder, rape and death.

Hitler hoped to come through the Caucasus to attack India from the other side

Europe lay at the feet of the Nazi conqueror. In Africa he looked stronger

There appeared to be no barrier to Nazi lust and conquest except the Red Army, the army of the toilers

### **Fascists On The Run**

The tide has at last turned in this gigantic and global battle between slavery and freedom between death and existence

The imperishable defenders of Stalingrad and the immortal Red Army opened the way for the final defeat of Hitler and his satellites. The undying resistance of the Chinese people, on the threshold of its seventh year, continually hampers the realisation of Nippon's dreams

The African offensive of the British American and Indian Armies—their bravery and courage—drove yet another nail in the coffin of Hitler-fascism

The joint action of the Indian Chinese British American and Soviet armies has forced the fascists to flee in mortal terror from the Middle East to the banks of the Donetz and the Volga

May Day sees the mortal enemy of mankind on the run—a hunted animal honed to perish in the near future

### **Gigantic Peoples' Rally**

Never in the history of mankind was there such a gigantic rally spread over our continents to defend human freedom

Stalin gave the slogan "Death to the Fascists"—Today Englishmen, Americans Chinese, Indians— all echo the same watch-word—Death to the Nazis!

Stalin raised the inspiring warcry "War of Liberation for all peoples"

Today progressive Americans, Britons—all demand that the war must end in the liberation of all peoples and that an end be put to the imperialist domination of nations

Inspired by this singleness of aim the American and British workers are performing marvels in production, to supply the

armies of the United Nations with weapons. They sweep before them every obstacle created by vested interests and compel the latter to retreat.

In contrast to the vacillations and cold calculations of imperialist statesmen, the British and American peoples, the working class demand the immediate opening of the Second Front in Europe to smash Hitler with one powerful and united blow and to end the war quickly.

Imperialist statesmen hesitate to liberate Europe. The peoples demand it.

Every reactionary compromise with pro-fascist forces only angers the people. It drives them to frustrate the game of the imperialist statesmen who attempt to cheat them of world freedom.

This international unity expresses itself most emphatically and sharply on the question of Indian freedom. The regime of repression draws universal protests: the demand for National Government and settlement with India is more than ever championed; every attempt to isolate India from the anti-fascist front, to keep her in bondage is strongly resisted as opposition to democracy. It is not for nothing that the peoples of the world have inscribed on their banner liberationist aims.

### **Towards Disaster**

When progressive peoples all over the world have made Indian freedom the acid test of democracy and anti-fascism, India is pulled back and prevented from contributing her full strength to the antifascist war.

Not wanting to transfer power, the bureaucracy attacked the Congress when the national organisation had declared its unflinching support to the anti-fascist cause despite Cripps' failure to hand over power.

Bureaucratic attack against the Congress called forth a reply in the shape of blind struggle which totally ignored the needs of national defence and the menace of the Japanese robbers on the border who were ready to march into our country to plunder our homes. It forgot the anti-fascist traditions of our national movement and that any step which weakened our anti-fascist resistance could not lead to freedom.

Taken advantage of by the fifth column the struggle degenerated into bombings of schools, anarchy against the people, sabotage of the means of national defence, organisation of food-riots, lootings, and open pro-Japanese propaganda.

It was not the spectacle of the Indian people marching forward to liberty nor of the bureaucracy being defeated.

It was the horrid spectacle of the path being cleared for the Japanese robber through sabotage of the means of transport and communications, the means of national defence, through undermining of people's morale.

The fifth column reaped the full harvest. The bureaucracy also its harvest of repression.

The people faced disruption : the bureaucracy felt strengthened

### **Illusions Shattered**

Through indescribable suffering the people began to realise the full meaning of the anti-national acts to which they were driven in sheer desperation. They left the path of sabotage, of crime against themselves, against the country's freedom

The Congress patriots also were not slow to understand the disastrous character of sabotage and attack against the means of national defence. From behind the prison bars Gandhiji saw where the nation was going and gave a call against sabotage and anarchy. Patriotic opinion began to turn away from the Fifth Columnist but went into sullen retirement, bitter that the struggle was so easily crushed.

### **Make A New Turn**

But there can be no retirement, no neutrality when empires are crumbling, when world-freedom is on the agenda. India must take her rightful place in this historic march for final liberation.

*May Day calls on her to make a new turn, to give up despair and throw her full strength in the anti-fascist war of liberation.*

It calls upon every patriot to intervene against the Fifth Column, against the friends of the fascists and to fight them as enemies of the people.



The Fifth Column organises sabotage incites people to rioting and looting. it insidiously sows pro-Japanese propaganda and undermines the morale of the people. It completely demoralises our people. makes them believe that they can never secure freedom through their own strength

It must be actively fought

May Day calls upon every patriot to organise our people for food. Thousands are starving today—a prey to Fifth-Columnist propaganda. The entire economic fabric threatens to collapse creating chaos and anarchy. What chance has our freedom—if we could not stop anarchy and demoralisation. Neutrality means advocacy of anarchy—leaving the initiative either to the Fifth Column or to the bureaucracy

*TO FORGE THE UNITY OF THE PEOPLE FOR FOOD AND AGAINST  
PILOTINGS TO FORGE IT IN FOOD QUEUES BEFORE SHOPS IN THE  
INDUSTRIES TO SAVING OUR PEOPLE TOWARDS GROWING MORE  
FOOD AND TOWARDS MORE PRODUCTION IN FACTORIES THIS IS THE  
ONLY PATRIOTIC WAY TO DAY OF REORGANISING OUR FORCES FOR  
FREEDOM'S STRUGGLE*

Our freedom cannot be won by starving our own people but by feeding them

There will be no dearth of following no dearth of unity, no demoralisation, if every patriot follows this path

Every success in securing food

for our people

Every step forward in growing

more food

Every measure of increased

production in factories

*means growing strength and unity of the people*

It is a blow against the Japanese invader and his fifth column. It is a blow to those who deny power to us—a blow in the cause of National Government and release of national leaders

### **For Self-Determination**

May Day which witnesses the biggest rally of the peoples of the world for Indian freedom enjoins us to build Congress-League

unity—the fighting unity of Hindus and Muslims for defence and National Government, for Indian and world freedom

Nothing but our failure to unite the major organisations has kept power and national Government from us. Today this failure keeps the nation's leaders in Jail and enforces starvation on our millions, Hindus and Muslims alike. It nearly cost us Gandhiji's life when was on fast.

Is there any reason why the Congress and League should not unite when the nation is in dire peril? There is none whatsoever. Both want India's freedom, both demand power to defend the country, both want to range themselves against the Japanese invader. Both want to feed our starving millions.

Neither wants the present autocratic rule to continue.

What prevents their immediate unity?

Failure on the part of the League and the Muslims to understand that the Congress in its August resolution had moved towards accepting self-determination.

Failure on the part of the Congress to unambiguously accept self-determination as the democratic right of Muslim nationalities.

Hindu-Muslim unity is there for the asking if only the patriots unhesitatingly accept self-determination. If only they thus dispel all doubts and suspicions from the minds of their Muslim brethren and win them over to the common fight for power and defence.

Was Hindu-Muslim unity within such easy reach of the people? Never before. Accept self-determination, dispel all doubts and enable the 100 million Muslims to join you for freedom and defence for national Government and release of national leaders—such is the simple and straightforward way of building unity and turning the tables on the bureaucracy.

## **We Are Not Crushed**

In spite of the advertised defeat of the Congress rebellion, the forces of the Indian people are not crushed. They have only to be reorganised and united for complete victory. A nation of 400 millions can never be crushed. It is shaking itself out of its earlier set-back. Its cause is championed abroad as never before, a real unity of the peoples of the world is shaping before our very eyes.

What room is there for despair ? Despair when national leaders are still in jail and have to be brought out '

Despair when the treacherous fifth column is busy '

Despair when our people are starving and have to be fed by us '

Despair when above all the demand for unity is growing apace '

*The fascists have cause to despair The imperialists have enough cause to be disappointed But not the Indian people when the cause of freedom is triumphing and the enemies of freedom are on the run*

FORWARD THEN TO FIGHT COLUYN SABOTAGE '

FOR FOOD FOR OUR PEOPLE '

FOR THE RESCUE OF NATIONAL LEADERS '

FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND CONGRESSISTICAL UNITY '

FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO DEFEAT DEATH TO THE JAPANESE INVADER '

## UNITY IN ACTION

*For National Defence and National Government  
Political Resolution adopted in the First Party Congress  
of the Communist Party of India :*

### 1. NEW WORLD SITUATION

1 Meeting under the shadow of the deepening menace of Japanese Fascist invasion, when the robber army of the Jap imperialism is pressing on the Bengal-Arakan Front and when Jap bombs are almost daily destroying Indian homes and lives in Chittagong and in the eastern districts of Bengal and Assam, the First Congress of the Communist Party of India declares that the supreme task before our people to-day is the defence of the Motherland. The struggle for freedom of our country merges with this task which can be discharged only by achieving the all-in unity of our people and in the closest co-operation with the peoples of the United Nations defending their independence and freedom against the fascist Axis. A new situation faces every people as well as India. A clear understanding of this alone would enable us to determine the correct patriotic policy and the task which face the people. The main features of this new situation are as follows:

(a) One issue dominates the life of every people in the world to-day. It is the titanic conflict between the camp of the people and the camp of fascist imperialism, between the forces of liberation and those of enslavement—the war between the coalition of the freedom-loving peoples of the U S S R, China, America and Britain and the robber combine of Hitler Germany, Fascist Italy and Militarist Japan.

(b) Before every people is posed the grim choice: Victory or Death, Freedom or Fascism, a people's world or a World of Enslaved peoples.

(c) It is the death battle of imperialism—the culminating point of a 25-year long road of deepening crisis of World imperialism. The forces of fascism—the spearhead of aggressive imperialism are hopelessly surrounded. The growing unity of the peoples of the

*(Resolution passed unanimously by the First Congress of the Communist party of India May 1943)*

world, drawn in the battle array under the lead of the Soviet Union, draws the noose tighter round its neck. The pre-requisites of the annihilation of Fascism, of the end of World Imperialism as such are at hand.

(d) The mighty Red Army of the Socialist Soviet Union, bearing the Main brunt of the fascist onslaught has transformed the whole situation. By its unparalleled blows, it has already tipped the scales of battle in favour of people's victory. It is transforming the peril of fascist-imperialist enslavement which menaces every people into an opportunity to win its own freedom, by uniting its people to defend the country and by uniting with the other peoples to strike together for a free world

India's fate and freedom is indissolubly linked with the fight for world freedom. This is no longer a fine phrase but a grim reality which emerges ever more clearly out of the gruelling experiences of our own people during the last eighteen months as well as from the happenings during the last two years of the war of liberation now being fought in five continents. Our people must unite to defend the Motherland, shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of the United Nations. That alone leads to freedom. Refusal to see this leads to the disastrous illusion of "freedom through the Japs as through Hitler". It leads straight to the other camp and to fascist enslavement.

Such is the clear issue posed by the new situation.

### **Stage Set For Final Battles**

During the two years of epic battles against fascism, the Soviet Union has not only stemmed the gigantic onslaught of the Hitlerite hordes but inflicted on it such signal defeats at Moscow (December, 1941) and at Stalingrad, (January, 1943) as have brought about a turning-point in the war. Soviet victories have given time and opportunity to the people's of the world to strengthen their unity, internally and on a world plane, so that all may strike together the final blows that will crush fascist-imperialism and free the world. The basis for people's victory and liberation is laid.

But the victory is yet to be won. The Fascist beast is maimed, but not crushed. It is preparing for its last desperate counter-attack to escape its inevitable doom. Hitler, expelled out of North Africa and severely mauled by the hammerblow of the Red Army, is preparing for new military ventures. The Jap fascists will yet stage a full-scale invasion of India, taking advantage of our weakness

and thus attempt to forestall the encircling counter-offensive by India, China and Australia, aided by the armies of Britain and America

The Fascists are seeking to utilise every crack and fissure in the unity of the anti-Hitlerite nations, to paralyse them from within. For this they rely upon those reactionary pro-fascist elements yet powerful in the ruling circles of Britain and America. These are the descendants of the same "Munichites" who in the pre-war days, conspired against peace, nourished the fascists and built up anti-Soviet plans. To-day these are working against the speedy opening of the second Front in the hope of weakening the U.S.S.R. They support Darlanism in North Africa, reactionaries in the Polish and Yugoslav governments, because they want to sabotage the people's revolts and liberation in the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe. They support forces who deny India freedom because they want to perpetuate imperialist domination over the Eastern people. These disruptive intrigues of the agents of the fascists working within the camp of the United Nations, hold up the total mobilisation of the people and their united and decisive action on the key sectors and imperil the outcome of these final battles due to begin after the clearing of North Africa, on which depends the fate and freedom of every people.

As against the desperate machinations of these reactionaries, the force of people's unity, inspired by the towering Soviet victories and led and organised by the Communist Parties, is growing in every country. In the fascist-occupied countries of Europe, the National United Front of the anti-Hitlerite patriotic forces is growing, leading to ever-greater sweep of patriotic partisan actions against the fascist butchers. The hour of liberation of the fascist-ridden peoples of Europe strikes. In Great Britain and America, the unity of the working class and the people is growing. The Communist Parties are in the forefront, carrying on a ruthless struggle against fascist agents, against promoters of disunity. They are striving to unite the labour and popular masses ever more firmly for the urgent and essential demands of common victory, viz. "Invade Europe Now!" "Support anti-Hitler-fascist revolutions in Europe!" "Organise and raise production for victory!", "No, quarter to friends of Hitler!" "Free India for common struggle for the liberation of East Asia from the Jap Fascists!", "Closet Co-operation, political and military, with the U.S.S.R. for victory and after!"

The first Congress of the Communist party of India greets the brother parties who are performing marvels of heroism and organisation in uniting the working class and the people in their respective countries for victory in the common struggle. The communist party assures them that it is sparing no effort to rouse and unite the Indian people and bring them in the common battle-line for the final all-out assault against the fascist gangsters.

## **II NATIONAL CRISIS**

### **Forces And Policies Behind It**

#### **Imperialist Policy**

India is faced with a double peril. The menace of Japanese invasion remains and grows. On the top of this comes the internal peril. Ignoring the grim warning sounded by the collapse of the imperial colonial regimes in Malaya, Singapore and Burma in the face of Japanese invasion, the British imperialist bureaucracy continued to think and act in terms of defending India as their colony and refused to free India to ensure active and voluntary co-operation of the people. Thus when under the pressure of the unity of the British and American people the Cripps Mission materialised these reactionaries sabotaged it. The Cripps Mission failed mainly because the bureaucracy refused to part with real power to the Indian people and prevented formation of a National Government capable of mobilising the people effectively for defence. Thereafter they passed over to the repression against the Congress which culminated in the arrest of the national leaders. They took full advantage of the failure of the Congress and the League to unite and to take initiative for rousing the people for national defence. They took advantage of the Congress threat of struggle and non-cooperation. They justified the repression of the Congress in the eyes of the British and American people. They painted the Congress as Fifth Column which wanted National Government to negotiate with the Japanese and not for national defence and thus drove a wedge between the people of Britain and America and those of India. The result was that the national crisis, precipitated by the arrest of the national leaders, has gone on deepening. The ghastly repression launched by the bureaucracy on the one hand and the sabotage movement organised by the Fifth Column and with the help of the angered patriotic masses on the other, created a situation of the gravest peril to India as well as to the cause of the United

**Nations** The Political crisis has deepened during the last 10 months. It got intertwined with the economic crisis on the production and food fronts which came in its trail. This means that while the menace of invasion grows the rear too is cracking up. Such is the double peril which faces our country.

### **Policy of Disunity and Defeatism**

It was certainly the bureaucracy which struck the first blow and precipitated the crisis of August 9. The Communist Party of India declares that the responsibility for the debacle in India rests in the first instance, on the heads of those reactionaries in the British Government who think of defending India as imperialist colony, who think and act as if victory over fascism can be won militarily and without the active and voluntary cooperation of people. They are playing with the fate of India as well as with that of the people's of Britain and America.

But that is only one part of the picture. For, it was the policy which our patriotic parties pursued, the policy of rejecting the only patriotic duty which the situation demanded, viz. the duty to unite the people to defend the country, which enabled the bureaucrat to run riot and gravely imperil the fate of our nation. The two great patriotic parties of our country, namely, the National Congress and the Muslim League, instead of realising that their first unconditional and paramount duty was national defence, instead of going forward to unite the people for the same, waited for the imperialists to give them power. They did not base policy on the strength of national unity which was now possible on the broadest scale ever achieved, for the most simple reason that a common peril now faced every class, every section of the people. They did not base their policy on the vast reserves of patriotism of our people which could now be called up by stirring call to the defence of the Motherland. Instead of basing their policy on the unity and the patriotism of the people, they relied upon the greed of the imperialists to keep India as their colony. They thought and acted on the assumption that the imperialists, wishing to defend India as their possession against the Japanese, would come down sooner or later and settle up with them if they held up national defence long enough. It was the most disastrous miscalculation in history. In practice the policy led to two things:

(a) It opened the flank of the nation to an attack by imperialist bureaucracy



(b) It opened the front of the country to the foreign invader

### **Features of The Crisis**

It is true that the A I C C Resolution of August 8 spoke in the language of burning anti-fascism of Nehru, and demanded National Provisional Government for the defence of India in collaboration with the British and American armies. But this was coupled with the negative policy of refusal to take initiative to unite the people to defend the country. Nay, more. It was coupled with the threat of "struggle" of active mass non-cooperation with the war and national defence. This gave the bureaucrats the excuse and opportunity to strike suddenly at the national leaders and justify that step in the eyes of the British and American peoples as a timely step against a planned Fifth Column revolt by the Congress. It gave them the opportunity to split the Indian people from their great allies, the British and American peoples. This is how the flank was opened to the imperialist offensive.

What followed was a spontaneous outburst of the patriotic masses, angered and incensed by the arrest of the leaders and repression. The Fifth Column entered and sought to seize control of the same and attempted to organise it as a widespread mass sabotage movement directed against national defence. The Fifth Column got the ear of the patriotic masses. It led them into act of sabotage against communications and transport. It instigated strike and deadlock movement against production. It organised provocative bomb outrages against the police and the people. It let loose anarchy, loot and terrorisation in the villages, and incendiary acts in the educational institutions. It justified all this in the name of "freedom revolution". Indiscriminate and widespread repression which came on top of this, only added to disruption and anarchy and progressively destroyed the morale of the people. The country was rent from end to end with conflict. The police struck against all and sundry through collective fines, terrorisation, and mass arrests. The Fifth Column organised anarchy against the people and goaded the patriot to destroy the means of defence, to stop production and to dislocate trade. A situation was created which was extremely favourable to the invader.

### **Political Crisis Intertwined With Economic Crisis**

Political crisis thus created, got intertwined with economic crisis

which was maturing during the two years of war. It deepened and aggravated the national crisis to the extreme. The intensification of the economic crisis leading to the disruption on the production and food front follows the same pattern as on the political plane. The bureaucracy refuses to part with power to the people and rapidly goes over to repression when they make the just demand of 'power to defend'. The national leadership instead of taking initiative for uniting the people for defence goes over to plans of holding up national defence. The Fifth Column steps in and drives the patriots to create disruption, chaos and anarchy.

### **The Food Crisis**

The deepening of the food crisis takes an exactly similar course. The Government's efforts to check prices of food grains which begin to rise during the course of the war, prove singularly useless. They were based neither on the control of stocks nor on the general scaling-down of prices, nor on the cooperation of the people and the traders. The prices soar as the war approached the border of India. The bankruptcy of the Government policy of checking prices by chaotic bans and restrictions become apparent. It created the profiteer who now turns hoarder. The grain begins to disappear from the market. As the political crisis approaches, the Government attempts to eliminate the profiteering grain monopolists by entering the market directly for making purchases for the army as well as for the cities. After the 9th of August, the grain monopolist hits back and goes over to systematic holding-up of stocks and as a part of struggle. The Government repression, and the general insecurity which follows makes hoarding by traders general. Food disappears from the market. A situation of mass starvation and food riots takes shape everywhere in the cities, towns and in villages. The Fifth Column appears on the scene, inciting hoarding by all and sundry and inciting food riots. "Government is robbing your food, so keep your grain," "Riot for food", and "Loot, that's the only way to food", are its slogans. This is how disastrous the food crisis appears and deepens against the background of the political crisis. The complete crack-up on the food front with the enemy standing at the door created a situation of the gravest peril.

### **Production Crisis**

A similarly perilous situation arises and matures on the

production front. When war comes to the soil of India, the production and transport apparatus have to meet the immense requirements of defence of India against invasion. At such time, the Government following its traditional imperialist policy obstructs the development of Indian industries because it fears the growth of Indian capital as against British monopoly capital. It refuses to grant the working class its basic demands and to get its organised co operation for raising production because it is afraid of the rising political power of the working class. The result is the the entire transport and production apparatus begins to crack up under the load of new requirements. Industrial goods become scarce. Their prices soar up, to 400 per cent (e. g. cloth). The worker is starving and discontented. The Indian capitalist grouching under the Excess Profit Tax and the lack of avenues for fresh investment is curtailing even the existing production. The political crisis coming on the top of this with the slogan "hold up production", and "deadlock" finds ready response among some industrialist who go over to sabotage and stoppage of production openly and others more clandestinely. The Fifth Column agents appear on the production front and attempt to close factories by all devices, by calling for "political strike for national struggle", by provoking strikes through the economic end, by taking the help of the millowners and closing the mills from above, and by finally attempting destructive sabotage in factories and the bombing of workers out of the mills.

Here again it is the policy of imperialist bureaucracy which creates the conflict, deepens the crisis and clears the ground for the fifth column. The policy of disunity, defeatism leading to suicidal struggle, followed by the patriots feeds the fifth column, who acts as saboteur on the production front, threatens grave crisis in production. This is how national crisis reacts on the industrial front, imperilling production and transport, the main basis of national defence.

### **Changing Face of Crisis**

In the 10 months that followed the 9th of August, the national crisis shook, the entire political, economic and social structure of the country. The fifth column, for whom the ground was cleared by the imperialist policy and who got the backing of the patriotic masses, thank to the defeatist and suicidal lead given by the national leaders, succeeded for a time in riddling the country with anarchy,

economic disruption and chaos. The invader could not have wished for a better preparation for an attack. The country was brought to the brink of national disaster.

Though the crisis has deepened and broadened during the last 10 months, the country had been saved, though temporarily, from a national disaster. The main factor which is responsible for bringing about this change is the heroic fight of the Communist Party against the Fifth Column and its slogans, the fight to isolate it from the patriotic masses, to unite the latter for defence, production, food and the release of leaders, to forge Congress-League unity for winning National Government of national defence. However, whatever success the Communist Party has so far achieved in averting the disaster, is rendered possible by two other factors. It is the thundering Soviet victory at Stalingrad (January 1943) and the expulsion of the Hitlerite armies from the Caucasus, which not only smashed Hitler's dreams of crashing through the Caucasus into the Middle East and of invading India, but forced the Jap fascist to revise his invasion time-table. This warded off the blow when India was most vulnerable and gave us time to isolate the Fifth Columnists from the patriots. The second favourable factor was the sound patriotic sense of our nationalist masses, born of 50 years of our freedom movement. It is this which enabled the patriot, out of his experience, to turn away from the Fifth Column. It is these three factors which have gone to save the country for the time being from the grave peril which faced our country in the most critical days of the crisis.

The fight of the Communist Party against the Fifth Column, aided by the sound patriotic sense of the nationalist masses, and by the favourable conditions created by the Soviet victories are bringing about a new shift in the camp of patriots. It is at present small but proves clearly the soundness and strength of our policy and shows how it is changing the face of the crisis. The changes that have taken place during the last 10 months are briefly as follows:

(i) The Fifth Column, the advance-guard of the fascist invader has lost the first round. He attempted to seize control of the entire nationalist movement and sought to build out of the first spontaneous outbursts an organised sabotage campaign. He failed to do so. After the first experience of the outburst and the repression which followed it, many Congress patriots began to turn away from sabotage, and

the political base of the Fifth Column began to crumble. In the first flush of anger, the patriot mistook the Fifth Column policy to be patriotic and the logical continuation of the policy of the jailed Congress leaders. But as the ugly anti-people and treacherous face of the Fifth Column emerged, through his criminal bombings, through his leaflets, and through his slogans on the food front, the patriot began to turn away from him. Communist Party actively assisted the process, by directly fighting against sabotage, by intervening in the disturbances between the police and the people, by its bold exposure of the Fifth Column and its slogans.

The followers of Nehru were the first to make the turn. Many genuine Gandhites too are turning away. The growing political isolation of the Fifth Column from the patriots is a major defeat for the former. But it is not yet his annihilation. The bulk of the patriots who have turned away from sabotage think they have fought and lost because the Fifth Column groups were worthless leaders. They do not yet see that the lead which the Congress gave them itself was wrong. They realise vaguely that unity is essential, doubt if it is possible. They do not realise what is necessary is unity in action for national defence, for holding the rear (food and production) and strengthening the front against the fascist invader, they do not realise that this alone will make the bureaucrat bend and get them national government. Consequently they feel frustrated and demoralised. This represents a potential danger, for in the event of an invasion, it will afford a basis for the Fifth Column to stage a come-back.

(ii) The Fifth Column sustained a signal failure on the production front. Except in two centres (Ahmedabad and Jamshedpur) where the stoppage was powerfully engineered from the top saboteurs whether from the top or from the bottom, nowhere succeeded in stopping production. The Fifth column threw the whole prestige of the Congress into battle, with the slogan "Strike for Swaraj under the banner of the Congress". Communists went into action against them with the slogan: "Stick to your jobs, for the defence of the country, under the banner of the Party." The rout of the fifth column was complete. The Communists held the industrial front against the assault of the fifth column because of their long standing political and trade union leadership of the working class. But the Communists have not so far been able to advance from this defensive position. They have not been able to rouse a patriotic upsurge

among the working class thereby enabling it to play its leading role in the defence of the country. Unless the working class itself girds its loins and comes forward to implement a patriotic production policy, for raising production for the army, and for the people, the anti-working class policy of the bureaucracy, the sabotage and restriction of production by profiteering owners and the nefarious activities of the fifth column cannot be finally defeated. Unless the Communists make this decisive turn, the situation on the production front will continue to be as perilous as it is to-day.

(iii) Large-scale Jap invasion did not materialise when chaos and disruption was at its peak or even later. When the invasion did begin in the form of the bombing of Calcutta and the eastern districts of Bengal, it became a test of the political strength and organisational capacity of the Communists to fight the fifth column, to sustain the morale of the people in Calcutta and in the countryside and to hold production and transport. The Communists of Bengal have passed the test with flying colours. The heroic fight they waged against the fifth column, the marvels of patriotic mass mobilisation they performed in the face of Jap bombs has become the beginning of a new shift in the patriotic masses all over India. It served to further isolate the treacherous fifth column from the patriotic masses. At the same time, the experience of Jap raids on Calcutta served to underline the danger which demoralised patriots represented by affording a pliable material in the hands of the fifth columnist mischief-makers.

(iv) Mahatma Gandhi's correspondence with the Viceroy released at the time of his 21 day-fast in February last, in which he came out against sabotage and expressed his wish for a reconsideration of the situation and for the solution of the food crisis was another blow to the fifth column. These statements of Gandhiji became the starting point of another shift among the patriotic masses to move away from the policy of sabotage. They helped the communists wean away sections of patriotic students as well as Congressmen from the grip of fifth column influence. But Gandhiji's statements by themselves do not help the patriot to free himself from the coils of a negative policy, which is the cause of his demoralisation. For Gandhiji repudiated sabotage and wants settlement but goes on fast to achieve it. He does not advance to accept self-determination as the basis of Congress-League unity, He does not advance from repudiation of sabotage to unity for defence and food. Therefore,

his statements though they serve to turn the patriot away from sabotage, leave him yet helpless and demoralised.

(v) The campaign run by Communists for Congress-League unity on the basis of self-determination, for the release of leaders, and against sabotage, as well as the successful efforts made by them in some provinces to forge unity with the League for the solution of the food crisis, has brought about a shift in the ranks of the League patriots. The desire to see Congress and League united for the solution of the deadlock and for the winning of National Government of national defence is growing among League patriots, among the rank and filers as well as among provincial and district leaders. This mass urge for unity has found expression in the statements of Mr. Jinnah which he has made in recent months. He has concretised the demand for self-determination still further which should bring the League near the Congress. He has expressed himself for Congress-League unity if Congress were to take the first step. But Mr. Jinnah and the League continue to pursue a negative policy towards unity and defence which is parallel to that pursued by the Congress. The League will not rouse the Muslim masses for national defence till the Government grants the self-determination demand. The League will not campaign for Gandhiji's release till Gandhiji writes to him his agreement on the self-determination demand. The grip of the influence of this negative policy on the League patriots is yet powerful. It presents the mass urge for unity from advancing to action for unity.

### **III. ROLE OF THE PARTY IN THE CRISIS—MAIN DEVIATION**

Against the dark clouds of deepening national crisis, the remarkable growth of our Party and its dogged fight against the fifth column stands out as a streak of silver-lining. During the past nine months, our Party has grown from a hunted underground organisation to a major political force in the country third in importance after the National Congress and the Muslim League. During this period we have surpassed in many respects all that we achieved in the last 15 years of our Party's life. Our membership has grown from 4,464 in July 1942 to 15,563 (May Day 1943). The circulation of our Party organs in all the 11 languages has reached a figure of 60,000. Workers and kisans organised in trade unions and Kisan Sabhas, under the influence of the Party, number

about 3 lakhs and 4 lakhs respectively. 39,000 organised students stand under the influence of the Party. Thousands of women have awakened to political life under the influence of the Party's work. 41,000 of them are organised in Mahila Sanghs. This progress we have achieved during the period of the crisis, at a time when the bulk of the nation and the patriots did not approve of our policy and thought it was a surrender. The Party has achieved this progress by tirelessly working for unity for food, production and defence by campaigning for national unity on the basis of self-determination, for the release of Congress leaders and for National Government of national defence. Ever-growing number of patriots are releasing to-day that our policy is sound and our practice yields results. The Party prevented sabotage in cities, villages and educational institutions. It stopped food riots and inspired faith and hope that food crisis can be solved. It kept up production and transport. This enabled the Party to isolate the fifth column politically and forge closer links with the Congress patriot. Through ceaseless work for Congress-League unity, the Party has brought patriots from Congress as well as from the League to realise that unity is possible and essential. .

Our achievements are great but they are of a defensive and negative character. We have held the fronts and created an urge for unity. But we are not yet able to transform that urge into a mass-swing for unity in action for food, production and defence. The crisis is worsening very rapidly. The tempo of our mass mobilisation is slowing down. While the growth of the Party between August 1942 and January 1943 has been a leap; from January to May 1943, our progress has slowed down. In the first period, the task was general agitational—the popularisation of our basic slogans. In the second period, the task is to strengthen mass organisations, to draw masses in the campaign for food, production, and for growing more food.

The main reason for this lag is a serious left-nationalist deviation which runs like a red thread through all our agitation and mass campaigns. Thus in the first period of the crisis, we concentrated the fire on the bureaucracy as the main incendiary. We exposed the fifth columnist and his sabotage slogan. But we did not expose to the patriot the negative and defeatist policy of the national leadership which had brought him straight into the hands of the fifth column. The result was that when mass of patriots swung



away from sabotage. they remained sunk in demoralisation instead of advancing towards the policy of patriotic defence. It is not enough to expose the fifth column to the patriot. We have to rouse the patriot to fight the fifth column. This we will be able to do only when we wean him away from the negative attitude towards defence which the Congress leaders taught him. only when we make him see that any advance against. the bureaucrat is possible only by uniting for defence.

In the second phase, namely, that of building national unity in action, continuance of left-nationalist deviation is a far greater drag on progress. For instance, a food campaign which reduces itself to a mere exposure of the bureaucracy coupled with formulation of general demands, leads not to food but to riots. The point is to unite the people against riots and for positive tasks in connection with the solution of the local food problem. This enables us to force the bureaucracy to change or modify its measures and prevent riots. Not to do this is to open the door of food riots to let in the fifth column.

In the case of both 'grow more food' as well as in the case of the production policy on the working class front, the main deviation is to completely miss the patriotic political basis of the production policy. The tendency is to carry out work on the kisan front as well as on the working class as of old, i.e., under the slogan. unite the kisan and the worker to win partial demands. This is sheer economism. Refusal to rouse the worker and the kisan to the patriotic task of defending the country by raising production, leads to failure to win the demands, as well as to strengthen organisation. This would leave the worker and the kisan helpless against the fifth column and the production front both industrial and food. exposed to the danger of sabotage.

On the student front, again, the tendency has been to take the easy path of carrying on the release campaigns as anti-repression campaigns only. Propaganda against sabotage, against the fifth column and his role as well as for the main slogan, unite for the defence of the country, has been slurred over. The result has been that our student Communists pleased the patriotic boys but failed to bring about a mass swing among the students for unity and defence.

All these deviations have one common root—namely, the failure to conduct a sharp struggle against the fifth column and its slogans,

failure to expose the negative policy followed by the Congress leaders and the tendency to over emphasise the "exposure" and the wordy abuse of the bureaucracy. In practice, this leads to under-emphasis on the slogans, unite for defence, fight the hoarder and the rioter, etc. If this tendency were to persist, it will reduce the striking power of our policy and practice and reduce our progress to stagnation. This deviation must be rooted out from every front in order that we may be able to advance from general agitational awakening to moving masses for unity in action.

#### IV. MAIN SLOGANS AND CAMPAIGNS

The basic slogan of today is national unity for national defence to win National Government of national defence. To implement this slogan, to win National Government the urgent need to-day is to build unity in action for defence, food and production. That alone would lead to freedom and victory. The Communist Party, therefore, enjoins every member and every Party unit to put out supreme effort to rally the people behind the following mass campaigns :

1. Unity for Defence against sabotage, against fifth column, for civil defence and for the support of armics. The fight against the fifth column as the agent of the foreign invader comes first and foremost. He must be fought out on all occasions, everywhere and on all issues. The groups which make up the fifth column are the Forward Bloc, the Party of the traitor Bose; the C.S.P. which betrayed socialism at the beginning of the war and pursued a policy of opportunism and disruption and ended in the camp of the Trotskyite-traitors; and finally, the Trotskyite groups which are criminal gangs in the pay of fascists. The Communist Party declares that all these three groups must be treated by every honest Indian as the worst enemies of the nation and driven out of political life and exterminated.

The Communist Party exhorts everyone of its members in the threatened provinces to join the A.R.P. and Civil Defence Services.

The Communist Party exhorts every member to popularise the role of the Indian allied armies as defenders of India.

In the threatened areas, Communists must offer organised co-operation of the people through their mass organisation, and Party units, to the British or Indian troops for offensive as well as defensive preparation.

For the support of the armies, and to build fraternal relations between them and the people, the Communist Party offers its anti fascist cultural patriotic squads to raise the morale of the Indian and British armies.

2. *Unity for the release of National leaders.* Their key slogan which we place in the forefront in the course of this campaign before all is **END DEADLOCK**. We want the release of national leaders, for making settlement possible, for their participation in the National Government of national defence. In uniting Congressmen for the release campaign, we must rally them against sabotage, against the fifth-column and for accepting the right of self-determination of Muslim (and other) nationalities. It must be brought home to them that this alone is the key to the release of leaders and no other. In winning the support of the League patriots to this campaign, we must explain how the release of Congress leaders, and Congress-League unity alone is the way of winning self-determination and no other. The only way to smash the resistance of the bureaucracy here and to assist the forces abroad which are pressing the British Government in London, is to bring about a mass swing among Congressmen against sabotage and for the acceptance of self-determination, as well as a mass swing among the Muslim followers of the League for the release of leaders.

3. *Unity for Food means*, first and foremost unity to prevent food riots, and unity against hoarding. The danger and gravity of the present food situation demands the concentrating the fire of propaganda against rioting as mutual slaughter and bold intervention to prevent food riots. The wrath of the people must be roused against hoarding as thieving people's food.

Communists must practically intervene in the food situation by building all—in people's food committees with all sections and parties in it. The more they discharge these agitational and organisational tasks the more they will be able to solve the problem and change the present position in which the bureaucracy makes naper schemes minus the people and leaves the execution in the hands of the hoarder and officials. District and town people's food conferences must be organised under the joint initiative of popular organisations and parties to create joint food committees, to achieve the following : defeat the fifth column propaganda among the peasants to withhold stocks, prevention of rioting and exposure of

hoarders, the unearthing of their stocks, fair price to the kisan, public control of all stocks, stabilising of all prices at a reasonable level, transport facilities for getting stocks, and smooth working of rationing in towns and a regular supply of stocks to honest traders and food committees in rural areas.

4. *Unity of the working class to produce more for the defence of the motherland.* The production policy of the Party is the practical and specific application of the main slogan Unity for Defence. To the industrial front, production is the key base of national defence which the working class mans. It is the patriotic duty of the worker to strengthen defence by taking initiative for organising more production and better transport, and against stoppage of work irrespective of what the boss or the bureaucrat does. The worker alone has the production in his grip and therefore, he alone can make practical production plans.

—100 per cent unionism is the key lever for implementing the slogan of production for the army and for the people.

—Communists take a bold and open stand against strikes as they injure the defence of the country by holding up production.

—100 per cent unionism, winning recognition of trade unions and mill and factory committees and the formation of Joint Production Committees to organise production to enable the worker to win his demands.

—Communists intervene in spontaneous strikes and settle them as soon as possible.

—Vigorous political explanatory campaign must be launched among workers exposing the role and the real face of the fifth-column groups such as C.S.P. Forward Bloc and the Trotskyites. Expose the role of the Royists as the splitters of Trade unions and as anti-patriotic agents of the bureaucracy.

Production Conferences should be organised in the different industrial centres. Through them is launched simultaneously an intense explanatory campaign for our production policy, for drive for mass trade unions, and for the formulation of practical plan for increasing production which workers can put into practice on their own, despite existing obstacles. This specific plan must be worked for each industrial centre by studying the industry mill by mill through preliminary workers' delegates' meetings.

The crux of our production policy is to rouse the worker to his patriotic duty in this hour of country's peril, is to rouse him to the

consciousness of his leading role in defending and saving the country. Even the elementary appeal for 100% unionism to-day must not be made through the economic end of partial demands but through the patriotic end : "To defend the country, to raise production." Unless the Communists make a decisive turn on the industrial front and rouse the working class to implement the patriotic production policy, they will not be able either to strengthen organisation or to win for the workers, adequate dearness allowance, 25% rise in wages, bonus, and the recognition of union. Unless this is done, the perilous situation which exists to-day on the production front cannot be liquidated and the door bolted and barred to the fifth-column. It is by carrying out this production policy that the working class strengthens the industrial rear and leads the organisation of National Defence.

5. *Unity of Kisans to Grow More Food.* The Slogan of "Unite the Peasantry to grow more food" plays the same role in the present situation on the kisan front, as the slogan "Unity of the working class for production" plays on the working-class front. It is the specific application of the general slogan "Unite to defend the Motherland" on the Kisan front. The appeal to the kisan to unite in thousands in the Kisan Sabha must to-day strike the strident note of patriotism—Unite to defend the hearth and home, unite to defend your fields and crops, unite to grow more food. Patriotism demands of the kisan that he unites to grow more food, to solve the food crisis, to feed the army that defends his land, to feed the worker who makes goods for the army and for the people. The kisan occupies a key role in the defence of the country which is on a par with that of the worker. The bureaucrat beats the drum of the "grow more food" campaign but wants to run it without winning the willing co operation of the kisan or of his organisation, both of which he hates, and without granting a single demand essential for the success of the campaign. No wonder that the campaign has brought no change. The landlord too cannot be expected to take the initiative for the grow more food campaign. Left to himself, his patriotism does not go beyond his rent receipts and he has no love for the Kisan Sabha either. It is the kisan who has to get on his legs and gird his loins for uniting thousands of kisans for the campaign. As soon as the kisan unites on this patriotic basis neither the bureaucrat nor the landlord can withstand his just demands for

fallow land, for irrigation facilities, for seeds, taccavi and for relief or remission from rents and interest.

The basis of all Kisan agitation and organisation, at present, must be this patriotic slogan of growing more food. The village unity built on this will be invulnerable to fifth column incitement to civil war. Congressmen and Leaguers can and must be drawn into this campaign. Thus it will not only enable us to bend the bureaucrat and the landlord and to expel the fifth column from the village but will also enable us build national unity in the village. To popularise the slogan and to initiate campaign, organise every local kisan conference as Grow More Food Conference, to plan out practical steps to grow more food and which in the locality must be made the basis of the campaign. In the preparatory campaign for the conference the political patriotic essence of the slogan must be thoroughly explained and the kisans won for it on that basis.

6. *Unity of Students.* Unity of the students to guard their right for education and freedom in institutions, to fight out the Fifth Column from the institutions, unite the students for civil defence and for the defence of the motherland, for food and against sabotage—these are the main slogans on the student front. It is of the utmost importance to intensify political explanatory campaign among the students. It is essential to expose the real treacherous role of the various fifth-column groups (C.S.P., F.B. and the Trotskyites) to the patriotic students and tear to shreds their pretensions to being Marxist-Leninist groups. It is essential to emphasise the acceptance of the right of self-determination as the only basis for national unity and the release of leaders. Special efforts must be made to draw the Muslim students into student organisations, closer links must be established between the Muslim Students' Federation and the A.I.S.F. for joint action on the issues of food, release of national leaders, civil defence, etc.

7. *Women's Movement.* One of the most striking features of the mass awakening that has taken place as part of the Communist crusade for unity during the crisis period, is the upsurge of women's movement, especially in the threatened provinces of Bengal, Andhra and Malabar. Profiting from this experience, Communists everywhere must pay special attention to the organisation of women especially toiling women. The main slogans for the organisation of women are self-defence, food and national unity. The entire Party

must be awakened to the tremendous importance of women's front in the fight to win over the patriotic masses and strengthen all mass organisations

Such are the main campaigns which this Congress of the Communist party directs its units to undertake and pursue with determination and vigour to create among the patriotic masses a mass swing towards unity in action for defence, food and production. Only if we make them a resounding success can we take our nation out of the crisis, prevent its deepening and extension and bring National Government. There is no other short-cut to National Government.

## **V. BUILD MASS C.P. AS BUILDER OF NATIONAL UNITY**

The Congress emphasises with particular stress that only an all-round consolidation of the advances made by us in the growth of the Party and its building up as a mass Communist Party alone would enable the Communists to mobilise the widest masses for unity in action for defence, food and production for winning National Government for National Defence. The phenomenal growth registered by the Party during the last 10 months clearly shows that all the conditions necessary for building a mass C.P. firmly rooted in the working class and the toiling passantry are at hand. If the progress has been slowed up during the last two months, it is entirely due to certain sectarian approach towards the recruitment and training of Party members. The growing number of working-class, kisan and student militants who are daily participating in the mass campaigns under the direction of the Party either as Red Guards or as Volunteers must be broadly recruited inside the Party and must be rapidly educated as active Party members.

Above all, the mass campaigns enumerated above must be run in such a way that they result in building up of mass organisations. Building up of Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas, and Students' and Women's organisations as a part of the food, "grow more food," production and national unity and release campaigns is the more urgent task. Every party unit must be drawn planfully on this drive to build the mass organisations. This is absolutely essential for laying an ever-widening base for the building of a mass Communist Party.

## VI. FOR FREE INDIA IN A FREE WORLD

The national crisis is reaching a new stage, the pre-requisites for its solution are maturing. They are seen in the growing mass swing of the patriots away from sabotage, in the growing sweep and striking power of our unity campaigns for food, for Congress-League unity, for the release of national leaders. What we have achieved so far is but a silver-lining in a situation which is yet dark. But the silver-lining is growing and is pointing the way to the solution of the crisis. All out effort on all hands, on all fronts, is the supreme need. The destiny of the nation is in our hands. We are the only Party on whose shoulders rests the task of pulling the nation out of the bog of demoralisation and getting the patriotic parties together to turn away from the barren path of disunity to the only patriotic path possible to-day, namely, for all-in unity for national defence. We are quite capable of shouldering this task. We are the Party of the working class, which is destined to shape the future of the world and of mankind. It is doing so already. The glorious Red Army under the leadership of Stalin and of the Bolshevik Communist Party of the Soviet Union is blasting the way to victory and freedom for us, for every people in the world. The strength of the peoples of the world is rising in support of our country's freedom as never before. For it is the urgent need for every people that India that is a breach in the world front today be converted into a bastion of popular national defence and a base for people's offensive for the liberation of East Asia. That is why every effort we make for unity here is healing the breach in our country. It is reinforced by the rising unity of the British and American people. Every blow we strike against the fifth column is struck against the common enemy together with the Red Army and is reinforced by it. What is needed is :

—All-Out efforts for national Unity.

—*For the supreme patriotic duty which faces us today—National Defence.*

We will unite the patriots to save the Motherland shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army and the armies of the United Nations and win a free India, in a free world.



## **WORKING CLASS AND NATIONAL DEFENCE**

### **A Report on production**

The political resolution draws our attention to the precarious situation on the production front. What is the essence of the situation? Production, the key base of national defence, is tottering at a time when the danger of invasion faces our country—this threatens the country with dislocation of transport, and industries in the midst of the food crisis and famine of industrial articles and creates the danger of blowing up the rear completely.

Such a situation directly endangers the front, the army of defence itself, which requires an ever-increasing stream of industrial articles and efficient transport to take armaments to the front.

The danger to our nation, inherent in this situation, is self-evident. Yet it is not realised as intensely as it ought to be, especially the fact that, it directly menaces our country's defence by threatening to cut off the supplies to the army. Its vital and direct connection with National Defence is not acutely felt and acted upon.

### **1. CRISIS IN PRODUCTION**

The production crisis with its attendant dangers is part and parcel of the national crisis through which our country is passing. It is part of the economic crisis which finds expression in speculation, high prices, inflation, food-hoarding. The production crisis is not an isolated phenomenon to be tackled on industrial front.

It manifests itself as follows :

- (1) failure of Government to develop any production plan;
- (2) Government's failure to secure the co-operation of the Indian Employers to harness the industrial machine to the needs of national defence, and requirements of the people ;

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*Submitted by B.T. Ranadive to the First Congress of the Communist Party of India on 28th May, 1943)*

(3) the hostility of Indian Employers to any schemes of control sponsored by Government, which leads to continuous friction between Government and Industry—friction which has tremendously increased since the attack against the Congress and the incarceration of the national leaders, and on account of the Employers' failure to look at production except from the profit end:

(4) refusal on the part of both Government and owners to invite workers' cooperation: on the contrary a policy is followed by both towards Labour which refuses to do justice to the workers and provokes them to stop production to secure their immediate demands.

Here we get the same combination of forces as on the National plane.

The imperialist policy of defending India as a colony and denying power to the people, a policy of obstructing industrial development in the interests of British monopoly capital which drives the industrialists into hostility.

The industrialists, in common with other patriots, get provoked by Government's attack and denial of power, follow for a time the policy of deadlock and then end by taking to sheer-profiteering, under the guise of non-co-operating with war-efforts. They look upon any plan as interference with their legitimate rights and freedom to manage their industry as they think best.

With their opposition to the workers' legitimate demands, and deliberate provocation of workers which leads to stoppages, the owners create ideal conditions of work for the fifth columnist to bring production to a standstill.

And finally the workers, led by the Party, do their best to save production: to keep off stoppages, to isolate and smash the fifth columnist and the saboteur, and to expand production for defence.

### **Face of the Crisis**

At a time when the danger of invasion is acutest, when the threat of civil disruption on the food front itself is menacing, the crisis threatening our entire national economy, the front and the rear, and the complete disruption of our life must be looked upon as a major danger and its face must be studied in all its aspects.

Firstly, the crisis manifests itself as a crisis of declining production when for the very existence of our country our production should be developing at breakneck speed.

A Few figures will suffice to prove that production of vital commodities is actually declining or, at best steady, except in a few cases.

The monthly Index for Industrial Production\* in

February,	1940	....	116.9
February,	1943	....	110.2

Indices for individual commodities are as follows:

Cotton consumption :

February,	1940	...	98.6
February.	1943	....	142.6

Jute manufacture :

February,	1940	....	149.2
February,	1943	....	117.9
January	do	....	92.0

Steel Ingots :

February,	1940	....	136.4
February.	1943	..	165.3

Pig Iron :

February,	1940	....	149.7
February,	1943	....	143.6

Coal :

February,	1940	....	123.0
February,	1943	....	115.0

The increase in the consumption of cotton does not mean that the problem of cloth has been solved—that the problem of meeting the need of the Army and the people has been met. Had it been so there would not have been a cloth famine leading to cloth riots; and cloth prices would not have soared by 4 to 5 hundred percent.

To take but one example of the rapid rise of cloth prices in the working class cost of living Index Number\*\* for Bombay City,

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\*Production Index from 'Capital', March, 1943.

\*\*Bombay Labour Gazette, April, 1943. page 553.

the cloth Index was	255	in	March
	374	in	April
For Ahmedabad	264	in	February
	315	in	March
For Nagpur	368	in	February
	450	in	March
For Jubbulpore	374	in	February
	445	in	March
For Madras	197	in	February
	205	in	March

In spite of the increase in cloth production people's needs are not met; that is plain.

Jute manufactures decline by 20 per cent and steel ingots register an increase of 20 per cent: at the same time, the vital commodity of pig iron shows a decrease of nearly 4 per cent. In the thirty-six months since February 1940, only three times did the production of pig iron exceed the 1940 level.

Most alarming, however, is the situation on the coal front India's industrial structure, electric plant and entire transport depend for their motive power on coal. The demand on our railway transport, and consequently on coal, has become very heavy now that India is a theatre of war after the arrival of the Japanese armies of invasion on our frontier. Railways have to carry far heavier traffic for the army, for its supplies; at the same time, they have to meet the heavier demands of traffic for civilian needs-transport of food, etc. All this means production of coal must increase at a terrific tempo. Instead, what do we find? Coal production going down below the 1940 level when neither our industries worked night shifts all round nor our railways worked extra and carried much heavy traffic. Can anything provide a more serious warning of the breakdown of the industrial machine at the most critical juncture? Should we be surprised if factories are closed for months for want of coal, if textile factories had to close down when people were demanding more cloth?

### **Disruption From The Economic End**

The production crisis, secondly, manifests itself as a strike-crisis to which the workers are driven by the policy pursued by the owners

and Government. The immediate cause here is the growing disparity between wages and cost of living—disparity which throws larger masses of workers in vital and strategic industries to stop work to save themselves from immediate starvation.

The rise in the working class cost of living is seen in the following figures :

### **COST OF LIVING INDEX**

City	For August 1939	For March 1943
BOMBAY	... 105	... 208
AHMEDABAD	... 73	... 173
SHOLAPUR	... 73	... 160
NAGPUR	... 64	... 165
JUBBULPORE	... 58	... 161
PATNA	... 109	... 243 (Jan.)
CUTTACK	... 103	... 239
MADRAS	... 98	... 170
LAHORE	... 120	... 317 (Jan.)
CAWNPORE	... 100	... 246
CALCUTTA	... 100 (Pre-war)	... 286 (May)

Needless to say, this enormous rise is not followed by and equal addition to working class incomes, Automatic adjustment of wages to cost of living, fixation of dearness allowance by reference to the rises in the cost of living, exists in a few industries only and that, too, has been enforced after strikes. Even here the allowance granted is totally inadequate—in the most favoured circumstances it is 60 per cent of the actual rise—barring the solitary exception of Ahmedabad. In almost all cases it is a mockery of compensation, hardly offsetting more than 20 per cent of the rise.

The Railways under Government control, the coal mine owner, and the jute bosses are the worst offenders in this respect. The Railway Board very nearly provoked an all—India General Strike of Railways by its policy of denial of adequate dearness allowance to stave off starvation; it was only the organised Railway Unions that prevented such a development.

The situation on the industrial front is then as explosive as the situation on the national front was on the 9th August. If it has not

burst into conflagration it is because of us, our Party, which has built the Trade Union movement during the last fifteen years.

Nonetheless the situation is extremely serious. It furnishes ideal ground for the fifth columnist to operate on. Fifth Columnism, which paraded as patriotism for some days, can masquerade here as the champion of the exploited and as the militant defender of the economic interests of the workers and can attempt to delude the workers into a Go-slow movement, into sabotage of industrial production through strikes and prolongation of strikes.

The spontaneous indignation of the workers itself runs into the channels of strikes, thanks to the policy pursued by employers and Government.

The policy that provoked the patriot to hit at national defence, is provoking the worker to hit at national production, when the worker should be building national production for the defence of his country and people.

The industrial rear is unsafe. Production, the key base of national defence is tottering.

## II. OUR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Comrades, in this critical situation what way did we show to our people, and to the working class? We, alone, of all the patriotic parties, developed a national and positive outlook towards production and attempted to implement it against heavy odds.

The patriots of the National Congress did their best to disorganise production after 9th August—in fact paralysation of production was their main instrument to win freedom immediately after 9th August. The National Congress leadership never developed a positive and patriotic outlook towards production as a weapon of national defence and, therefore, as the common concern of all people.

The Muslim League, has no outlook, no policy whatsoever on questions of production: on this as in matters of National Defence it leaves the initiative in the hands of the Government. The disorganisation of production, etc., has no importance in the eyes of the League.

For us, on the other hand, national defence was not a mere phrase, nor a conditional bargain. We realised that the very existence of our country depended on its being able to defend itself against

the Japanese invader; that our very future depends on how far the people of this country seized the initiative in defending their motherland.

We knew at the same time that defence and production went hand in hand in modern times. We, therefore, declared production—its organisation and expansion—to be our job, the job of all honest workers, just as national defence is the job of all patriots irrespective of what conditions are offered or created by others.

The close relation between production and anti-fascist defence and our policy towards the former cannot be more simply summarised than in the following words of R.P.Dutt:

“The problem of strategy and production are closely related. In modern mechanised warfare it is estimated that four to five industrial workers and auxiliaries are needed behind every soldier in the firing line. Production is thus the main field of effort for the majority of the people in the fight against fascism. Here every man and woman can play their part and express the will to victory over fascism.

“The resolution to fight and defeat fascism means that we must equip the armed forces with adequate weapons of war to meet and overpower the Nazi military machine. We must ensure the effective transport of such weapons of war in time to the fighting front and produce the necessary industrial materials and machinery. We must provide the means of livelihood, food, clothing, etc., for the fighting and producing forces to maintain standards of efficiency. This all—out effort for production and for victory is not merely the job of the Government or those in command of industry. It is the conscious job of everyone to participate with the highest personal effort and to assist in the tasks of organisation and the overcoming of obstacles.

“Fascism can only be finally defeated not by heroism alone, but by superior weight of planes, tanks, guns, shells, to arm that heroism. This is the decisive test in modern war, which is in the last resort not merely a test of fighting capacity and of morale, but an industrial test of equipment, organisation, skill, and the capacity for united effort and sacrifice.” (Britain in the world front.)

### **We are Tested**

The 9th August crisis put us to a severe test. It was a test of our political influence over the working class.

It was above all a challenge to us to implement our production policy in conditions of extreme political provocation

The challenge, here, was to keep production itself going. And we won the first round. Throughout the country, wherever we had influence, industrial production was disturbed to a very small extent, things returning to normal within a couple of days in places like Bombay; no disturbance whatsoever took place in places like sholapur.

This first round was won not merely because we were the undisputed leaders of the Trade Union movement but because we had been vigorously popularising among the workers the patriotic policy of National Unity and National Defence against Japanese aggression which threatened our country.

When after the arrest of national leaders, enraged patriots and fifth columnists began to call upon the workers to come out on general strike and to bring about deadlock in production, we boldly opposed this move, saying that strikes, instead of enabling us to force the bureaucracy to yield us National Government, would have exactly the opposite result. Strikes would not only have paralysed the keybase of National Defence, but would have intensified a thousandfold the conditions of anarchy and disruption, which followed in the wake of Government repression and fifth column-provoked sabotage. Strikes would have created extremely favourable conditions for the Japanese invader who was mustering forces on our frontier to attack our country immediately.

Workers who had for years followed our political lead stuck to their post of duty. They succumbed neither to the provocation of police repression nor to the instigation to go on strike, which was being conducted in the name of patriotism.

The result was that the saboteurs from the beginning had to rely on the owners, on lock-outs, on hired gangs to create trouble and bring about a stoppage. The first onslaught against production was thus warded off; the nation was saved; but for us, the entire industrial structure, including transport would have gone up in smoke. We are rightly proud of the part we played in these critical days.

On the heels of the national crisis came the food crisis and the economic crisis, leading to an outburst of a spontaneous wave of strikes which, but for us, would have spread all over the country.



The worst period was between December 1942 and February 1943.

There were strikes for food and for dearness allowance. There were strikes in railway workshops, producing for war; in textile factories; in engineering shops, working for war; in dockyards and in the tram services. Workers in backward industries on strike: workers in organised industries on strike—such was the situation which faced us in the period—December—February.

It was no doubt a very critical situation. It seemed that what patriotic anger could not achieve, the disruptive economic policy of Government, driving the workers to desperation would achieve, viz, complete paralysis of industry. And it would have done so but for our Trade Unions and our patriotic policy.

Comrades, who averted an all—India Railway strike when the Railway Board was refusing to grant additional allowance and when strikes were breaking out in Railway workshops? It was we who conduct some of the biggest Railway Unions like the S.I.R. and conduct other Unions in co-operation with other elements. But for our firm hold on the railway workers, there would have been spontaneous actions spreading all over India. We held back the strike—wave. We roused the workers to defend production, the keybase of national defence, against the suicidal policy pursued by Government.

We prevented strikes from spreading: or intervened in spontaneous strikes and speedily settled them: or withdrew them pending settlement of disputes.

Thanks to us, not only did strikes not spread but the loss of working days in spontaneous strikes was minimised, the strikes were short—lived and often operated as merely minor disturbances.

We succeeded in saving thousands of days for production and keeping hundreds of thousands at their job in spite of provocative economic conditions.

That was because we had realised that we could not make merry with strikes when the nation required our workers to be at their job for all the 24 hours.

We, to a large extent, succeeded in keeping production and transport running in Calcutta when Japanese bombs rained on that city. The treacherous fifth column tried its hardest to spread panic and to dislocate production and transport, in the interest of the

Japanese invader. But the bulk of engineering workers and the tramway workers stuck fast to their post of duty. The patriotic tramway workers, under Communist lead, kept the trams running right through the air raids and set an example of courage which inspired the citizens of Calcutta and keyed up their morale.

Comrades, once more, no other party can claim that it has rendered such signal service to our country on this front; no other party has. We alone, of all the parties, took the defence of our country seriously and, therefore, safeguarded production as determinedly as we would defend a fortress on our frontiers.

### **Working Class Votes For Us**

What have been the results of this policy for workers themselves, this policy of standing by production by avoiding strikes, negotiating and settling them speedily. Has it meant that the interests of the workers had to be sacrificed for the interests of national production ? Did it mean that all organisation was at an end ? Did the workers themselves repudiate our practice or did they endorse it?

Our opponents and enemies no doubt expected that we would collapse before the strike-wave, born as it was out of economic discontent, and stand repudiated by the workers.

What happened instead ?

The number of workers in Trade Unions organised by us increased from 2,00,000 to 3,00,000 between Lenin Day 1943 and May Day 1943 alone.

The advance will be still more striking if we were to take the figures from August 1942.

The addition of 1,00,00 workers to our Trade Union membership is a signal of endorsement by the ordinary worker of the policy pursued by the Party—the policy of standing by production and settling disputes without recourse to strikes. How have we been able to register this increase in these worst days of strike—wave, when nothing but a strike seemed to be the way out ?

Because by pursuing this correct policy, we have been able to secure many advances and concessions for the workers—we have been able to secure some relief and thereby increase the worker's faith in his organisation and in us as his defenders.

Comrades, many of us have under-estimated our victories in this

direction. We have secured timely relief, sometimes substantial relief, and thereby avoided a final crack-up in the production front. Without securing such relief it would have been difficult to keep production going. By uniting the workers we did succeed in creating breaches in the stonewall of resistance of the bureaucracy and employers.

Our policy then has enabled us to defend the day to day interests of the workers and win important concessions, to save the Trade Union organisations from complete disintegration and ruin; which would have been their lot had they followed an anti-production policy, a wrong policy; our policy has enabled us to extend the base of the old Trade Unions and to build big mass Unions out of them (like those of the S.I.R., M.&S.M. Rlys); found new unions and increase the organisational strength of the workers.

We have increased the capacity of the worker to defend his interests; we have added new strength to his organisations; we have organised hitherto backward and unorganised workers—all because we strove valiantly to save production from ruin and did not allow the workers to fall victims to economic and political provocation or to fifth columnist incitement.

### **Our Main Failure**

Comrades, the account of achievements as given above itself emphasises our main failure. All the while we have been busy warding off the attacks against production. All we can boast of is that we saved production from collapse and from stoppage. But considering the key role of production in defence, considering the fact that the danger of invasion is acute, we cannot remain satisfied with what we have achieved during the past nine months or so, but must positively sound the alarm.

For we have not yet been able to claim that we have gone beyond the defensive stage, that we have anywhere led the workers to seize the patriotic initiative in any industry or concern to organise production as their job, as their national duty. No Comrades, we have not achieved any success in this direction and this must make us think furiously.

Production—its organisation and extension, is the basic and main political task of the Trade Unions today. It is by organising production, by developing workers' initiative to overcome obstacles

created by employers and Government, by creating mass movement to increase production by all possible means that the Trade Unions participate in organising the National defence of our country. Every victory in production, every addition to industrial articles secured through workers' initiative, is a blow against the Japanese—for the freedom of our country—this ought to be the patriotic consciousness of every worker under Trade Union influence. Without this, our policy ceases to have any meaning.

Under our leadership the working class must be really seized with anger and indignation at the supreme chaos in production under the policy of Government and the employers; it must see in it a menace, a danger to our entire nation, a stab in the back of our people and must consider its patriotic duty to intervene and take upon itself the responsibility of guiding production. It must be moved by the terrible hardships of our people owing to shortage of cloth, coal, etc., and must come forward as the real champion of our people against all these by assuring them that every worker would serve his country and his people to his maximum capacity.

This is workers' patriotism; this is producers' patriotism—taking pride in his daily job at the bench. This is carrying our policy to our class.

Mass initiative for production is thus, first and foremost, a political responsibility—part of the fight for national defence. It is a political task. The Trade Union movement is the instrument, the working class army is to discharge this great responsibility.

A special responsibility rests on us who are the biggest single force in the Trade Unions to inspire the entire class to come forward as the organiser of national production for national defence.

Our main failure comes here. True, we have roused the worker to stop sabotage against production but we have failed to move our—class, the workers, to develop a patriotic outlook and a different practice towards production. There is as yet no inspiring of the mass; no mass rallies and mass conferences for production; no individual efforts to lead the mass of the workers to be the best producers, much less workers' initiative to lead the people for better production for national defence.

The workers under our leadership refuse to disorganise production at the instigation of the fifth column; more and more they fight against the temptation of a strike as the way out of the unbearable

economic conditions. Yet the vital connection of production with national defence and workers' responsibility towards it is not properly understood by them.

### **III. THE POLITICAL ROOT OF OUR FAILURE**

From where does this failure spring ? It comes from our political failure to move the working class to play its specific role in the sphere of national defence.

To understand the seriousness of this, we must remember that production is on the Trade Union front what national defence is on the political plane.

It amounts, therefore, to abandonment of the anti-fascist struggle, of the struggle for national defence on the Trade Union front.

It amounts to giving up in practice the main political slogan of the Party and keeping the workers away from the greatest national and international war for liberation.

We have not yet succeeded in inspiring and moving the entire class into action for unity and defence of our country—that is a patent fact. The political resolution nails down a number of deviations which prevented us from mobilising the people for national unity and defence. These deviations perhaps operated with added force on the trade union front.

In any case even the best Trade Union Leaders in the party will admit that, in spite of our influence over the working class, the increased strength of the Trade Unions, we have failed to impress the workers with the urgency of national defence; national unity for defence has not yet become their war-cry, enthusiastically to be raised and to be fought for, as the only way to the independence of the country and towards further progress.

Why is this so? Firstly, because of the very same Left-Nationalist deviation of which the political resolution speaks. They have prevented us from putting inspiringly the cause of our country's defence and rousing the workers to offer everything they possess to defend our land.

Obviously when exposure of bureaucracy dominated our political propaganda much could not be done to put positively the line of national unity and defence.

This side-tracked our attention so completely that in putting across national defence, our comrades often forgot even to mention

that our homes and people in Chittagong were bombed; our homes were going up in smoke.

In other parts of the country there were practically no reactions to the Calcutta bombing, which was taken as a matter of course, but which should have really led to angry patriotic demonstrations against Japanese imperialism.

We failed to whip up anti-Japanese hatred, failed to whip up anti-fascist hatred, even though a bald account of that atrocities committed by the Axis Power would have roused the hatred of any honest man and warned him against what was coming if defence was not organised.

Naturally with all these we could not impress on the workers the seriousness of the situation at the front and the imminence of invasion.

These deviations reached their climax in our failure to glorify the patriotic act of the working class in keeping production running immediately after 9th August, in our failure to carry forward the patriotic achievements of the Calcutta Tramway Workers, who kept the services running under the hail of Jap bombs.

The workers themselves did not understand what they had achieved. The patriots were slandering the workers as mercenaries who had deserted the battle of freedom. The latter had stuck to their jobs under our leadership but were getting demoralised under the barrage of propaganda.

It was our job to tell the workers that they had done a big thing, had acted for national defence. This was missed because our comrades thought of national defence and sabotage in the abstract.

Similarly, the constant fight which the workers had to wage against strike-inciters, against gangsters, to keep production running, against owners' lock-out, was not given a political turn, the defence of production actively conducted by workers was not explained in terms of national defence; the concrete fight carried on against the fifth columnist was not made the starting point for a general mobilisation for unity for national defence and production. The key role which the workers had to play in averting the crisis in production, which was deepening at an alarming pace as a result of the policy of the owners and the bureaucracy, was not brought home to the workers.

Because of this the entire experience of the period between

August and now—a period in which the working class defended production against odds—failed to educate and prepare it for the main and primary task of building production through mass initiative.

The worker cannot be roused to play his part in production unless he is made to realise the grim peril which fascist aggression means to our country, unless his patriotism is roused to see that the fight for the freedom and independence of the country now merges with the task of uniting the people to defend the motherland in alliance with the peoples of the Soviet Union, China, U.S.A. and Britain. He must be made to realise how production is the key to National Defence, how the crisis which is threatening production can blow up the very basis of national defence and that he, because he holds production in his hands, can avert this calamity and save the country. It is the consciousness of the peril and the call of patriotism which alone would rouse the worker to increase production

Consider his conditions of work which are hellish today. Consider his past experience which has only shown that every advance in his skill has been exploited by the employers; that nothing is to be secured from the employers without a fight; that Government is an alien Government which suppresses his nation, his people and his rights.

The only guarantee is the burning patriotism and anti-Japanese hatred created by us, which makes him see in higher and higher production—work for freedom for his people—the guarantee of his liberation and that of his nation

Our political failure to move him for national defence, make national defence and unity the full-throated cry of thousands, has meant our failure to move him for production—his main job in the struggle for national defence, the main job of all Trade Unions.

This leaves the initiative in the hands of the bureaucracy and employers, accentuates the production crisis, endangers national defence and prevents us from taking any effective step against it.

### **Production—Wrongly Put**

Consequently, production, whenever it has been put, has been put as a technical or economic issue divorced from its vital and living connection with national defence or its connections with the needs of the army and the people.

And finding that there is not much response to this sort of appeal, comrades have either given up production as a bad job, contenting themselves with avoiding strikes and only paying lip-service to it.

Or making the worker gulp down our lifeless and abstract demand for increased production, some put it together with a barrage of economic demands, with emphasis on the latter.

The appeal to patriotism is lost; the appeal based on unity and national defence is gone; all that is left is the word "production" which we equated to economic demands.

The way in which economic demands are put show that they are intended to take off the edge of our advocacy of increased production. Comrades are afraid that the workers might misunderstand us, take us for the bosses' men, and think that the economic demands are our passports of honesty and integrity to assure the workers. This springs only from a lack of faith in production policy, lack of faith developed by divorcing it from our main slogan of national defence.

What is the total effect of this propaganda produced on the worker? Is he a whit convinced that next day he must work in the factory as the most efficient worker? Nothing of the kind. He is more than ever convinced that he is concerned only with his wages and not with production.

Having failed to move our class politically, our comrades either end in paying only lip service to productions without any attempt to increase it, or present it in a more vulgar economic form in which it carries no convictions.

This has been yet another hindrance which keeps the workers back from discharging their main political job as producers—producers for freedom and defence.

### **Economic Demands Become Conditions**

It is no wonder, therefore, Comrades, if some of us have slipped into the left nationalist position of conditional support to production. Gradually, step by step, economic demands are put forward as conditions of increasing production. Not that our comrades crudely formulate them as conditions. No, but when they put it to workers that production cannot increase unless workers' demands are conceded, in the bargain they fail to rouse political enthusiasm for



production—the net result is that economic demands do operate as conditions.

Can anything be more serious? What would you say if any member of our Party were to say, "give us National Government and then we will defend our country". You will say : you are laying down conditions to save your homeland; you are bargaining over the freedom and existence of our country; this is not patriotism; it is the same wrong policy of the national leadership, which landed our country in this crisis.

And yet on the field of production unconsciously we have slipped into this very policy. Economic demands are advanced in isolation from production. Consequently they appear to the workers as conditions of a drive for increased production. What we reject on the political plane, namely conditional participation in national defence, some of us seem to acquiesce in on the production front—a sharp reminder to us that we have strayed away from our basic line. It leaves the initiative completely in others' hands—the hands of the bureaucracy and employers.

### **Old Outlook Persists**

If we look at our propaganda and agitation, the role of economic demands as conceived by us, we will find that our comrades will have to change their outlook completely before they can become good organisers of production.

How do we agitate for economic demands to-day? What justifies these demands? What demands do we champion?

At each period we put forward such economic demands as enabled the worker to move forward politically along with the nation and enabled the nation itself to take the next step forward. For us the economic demands were an integral part of the struggle for national emancipation. That also meant that they must be such as to help both the workers and the nation in building national unity for the common cause.

We knew that the exploitation of the working class would not finally end unless capitalism was abolished and the means of production socialised. Still, neither in the period of imperialist war, nor before did we put forward these demands as those to be immediately realised. On the other hand, our demands included minimum living wage, eight hour day, etc.,—demands which

corresponded to the stage of the national democratic revolution against imperialism.

This justified the workers' demands and made them a part of the national struggle. It was within this framework that we fought our immediate battles against exploitation.

Today everything has changed. Our nation's freedom depends on national defence. The very existence of the nation with all its workers is at stake. The road to national freedom lies through unity and national defence.

We require national unity for defence.

We demand National Government for national defence.

We demand release of Congress leaders for anti-Japanese defence.

Every slogan, every demand stands or falls by one test—whether it serves the needs of our defence or not, serves us to unite our people to defend our country or not.

*The immediate economic demands, then, stand or fall by this acid test: Do they enable us to increase our national resistance? Transferred to the field of production economic demands are today advocated and justified, in so far as they improve the efficiency of workers and enable them to give maximum production to the nation. The demand for better conditions, for fair wages, etc., has its justification in this.*

Comrades, when we said in our Party documents, "workers ought to get more wages to improve production", it was not laying down a condition, but putting the immediate demands on a different plane—the plane of anti-Japanese defence. The significance of this, however, was not understood.

What does it mean to-day? We decidedly stand for improvement in labour conditions, for adequate compensation against high cost of living, for Trade Union recognition, etc., because this helps the nation forward and enables the worker to build national strength through increasing production.

At the same time, it means that this fact has to be consciously realised by the workers themselves. Their patriotism and our propaganda must teach them that production is the sacred trust given by the nation, and only by executing that trust in spite of all obstacles that they are able to appeal to the nation for improvement in labour conditions and legitimately demand better standards of

pay, fair wages, etc.. and that only thus do they become one with the nation.

Improvement of labour conditions for maximum efficiency is not an empty phrase with us. It means that in our agitation, propaganda, speeches, and leaflets, workers must be continually taught to give up the old outlook, inspired to look upon production as their patriotic duty and undertake that task as their duty to the country, and as their only weapon of securing their demands and doing away with the present hellish conditions.

This alone puts economic demands in proper relation to national defence and production—this alone enable us to organise production and at the same time bring about a radical improvement in labour conditions.

### **.Our Agitation**

It cannot be said that we agitate for economic demands keeping to the forefront the needs of national defence and production. On the other hand, we agitate for them mostly in the old way. We regard them either as a question between exploiting owners and exploited workers, or as one against a foreign government pursuing a policy of hostility to workers. The question of production itself, workers' responsibility towards it, is not hammered; and economic demands are not put in as part of the production drive which he must carry on at all costs.

The opposition to economic demands by the owners or by the bureaucracy is, therefore, not realised as opposition to production and defence; on the other hand, it is realised only as denial of just demands which must be enforced through wrong and old type of propaganda.

Take the question of profits. How are these enormous profits attacked in making out a case for increased earnings? Purely from the point of view of exploitation as if the workers and the employers were the only two parties; as if the entire nation including the employers and workers are not threatened with immediate slavery; as if the policy of united resistance had nothing to do with the industrial front.

Consistently with our political line, profits could be correctly criticised, attacked, from the standpoint of equality of sacrifice in this war for national defence. Fair wages could be justified and at

one stroke workers could be made to realise that it was not a question between themselves and the employers but one between the nation and its enemy. The profiteering carried on by employers is thus exposed as anti-national selfishness in contrast to the patriotism of the workers.

Our propaganda and agitation, therefore, must be so conducted that the struggle for immediate demands must be understood by the worker as part of the bigger struggle for increased production and defence. the former must be understood to be dependant on the latter.

Workers must realise more and more that struggle for partial demands is not an isolated issue between employers and employees or between an irresponsible bureaucracy and workers only. to be settled through a trial of strength in the shape of a strike. Because it is part of the struggle for increased production, it can only be won in so far as the workers organise and increase production and do not imitate either the employers or the bureaucracy in holding it up.

In the rejection of partial demands they must see not only continued intensified exploitation but an attempt to strike at their efficiency and disrupt people's production and defence. They will thus realise that every struggle for partial demands is really an issue between selfish employers or bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the people as a whole, on the other. They will then refrain from taking to isolated and disruptive action in the shape of strikes, and realise that workers' initiative and unity to organise production and people's support to the workers constitute their real sanction to enforce their demands.

Instead our agitation yet continues on the old rails. Economic demands are taken in isolation from defence and production; they are presented as an issue between owners and workers or bureaucracy and workers; our comrades utilise all the old phrases in their propaganda and do everything short of strike in the old way.

*The failure to correlate the immediate demands to the needs of national defence and production—the failure to completely overhaul propaganda and agitation,—is a very strong cause hindering the release of workers from the old outlook towards production and smothering their initiative to develop it.*

## **Where Does it Lead ?**

Such an outlook really leads to strikes and more strikes

In the present unbearable economic conditions the only thing that will keep the worker away from stoppage is his sense of duty towards production, that not having been developed and conditions getting worse, wrong propaganda only leads to strikes and more strikes.

Unless, therefore, the worker is politically roused, he would under the present conditions drift into a series of spontaneous strikes for economic demands. He would think that he is striking for just demands which are necessary for raising production. He would not realise that by doing so he is striking at the nation, at national defence. This would give the fifth columnist another chance to play havoc with production. Having failed to create a prolonged deadlock in the industry by provoking the workers to go on an indefinite political strike, the fifth columnist is now attempting to carry out guerilla warfare against production by provoking economic strikes, taking advantage of the horrible conditions of a labour.

The failure, therefore, to overhaul propaganda and agitation not only leads to strikes but makes the worker a prey to fifth columnist sabotage, masquerading as militant defence of day-to-day demands.

## **IV. OUR POLICY IN RELATION TO STRIKES**

Our political resolution calls upon us to "take a bold and open stand against strikes as they injure the defence of the country by holding up production."

In recent months, Comrades, we have no doubt avoided strikes and minimised the loss of working days. Yet it must be admitted that the general confusion in the execution of production policy was reflected on the question of strikes also and an open and decisive stand against strikes was not taken. We still looked upon strikes as a justifiable weapon of economic pressure — in the last resort, a weapon to secure the immediate demands of the workers.

*The resolution asks us to give up this indulgent attitude and adopt a firm one to guide the workers.*

All production to-day we consider as national production devoted to the defence of our people. Gone are the days when we could

say it is imperialist or capitalist production with which we will have nothing to do.

Drive and initiative for increased production is the duty of workers.

How then can we justify strikes, stoppages of work which stop the flow of goods to the army, to our people?

Comrades, are there any conditions under which you will ask the soldier at the front to desert his post to secure this or that demand ? If you will not advocate military desertion, you can neither advocate industrial desertion in the shape of a strike.

A strike, therefore, is as disruptive as a food riot or looting.

Do we allow the peasant to withhold grain from the market to secure better prices, or do we rouse his patriotic consciousness against it ? Similarly, should we allow a worker to withhold production and hold up transport, and deprive the army and people of vital needs?

Granted that the employers are behaving brutally towards the workers ; but the worker to reply back through strikes is to stab his country for the misdeeds of selfish employers.

We should then regard every strike as a political defeat for us, because it means that the workers concerned are not yet convinced by us about the disruptive role of the strike, about their responsibility towards production and national defence.

We should regard it as a suicidal gamble on the part of workers which will only disrupt their ranks without securing their demands, and hand them over as innocent prey to the fifth columnist and saboteur.

In the interests of the nation, in the interests of the immediate demands of workers themselves, strikes should be firmly prevented—that is the call of the resolution.

Where spontaneous strikes break out we intervene to do away with these disturbances in production.

The intervention in spontaneous strikes is to save the workers from the irreparable harm they do to themselves and their country by stopping production, to save them from the hands of saboteurs. It is to withdraw the strike as speedily as possible and it should on no account degenerate into ourselves prolonging it under one excuse or another. The success of our intervention is measured by one test only—how soon we convince the workers to give up the

strike and see in unity for increased production the real sanction to enforce their demands.

### **Doubts Answered**

Two doubts primarily assail the minds of our comrades when we take this positive and firm stand about strikes—the only stand consistent with our production policy.

Their recent experience makes them feel that it is not possible to repeatedly hold back the workers from strike.

And secondly, does not this policy towards strike mean the abandonment of defence of day-to-day interests, does not it amount to Royist policy ?

### **Recent Experience**

Recent experience is no guide, and in so far as it is, it proves exactly the contrary

Our comrades have settled a number of strikes; won important victories; in some cases the workers were persuaded to go back without any change for the better to be able to negotiate a settlement.

In a number of these cases, they say, they found strikes on their hands, workers having been forced to resort to them in sheer desperation.

This happens because strikes have been settled behind the back of the worker, without convincing him that it was politically wrong to have gone on strike and thus without making any political preparations to meet the incitement by employers or Government. In these conditions speedy settlement of dispute is only a prelude to further strike.

A clear warning to the workers that immediate demands cannot be won through strikes; that strikes only disrupt their unity and strength and make them helpless before the employers and bureaucracy; a straight appeal to them in the name of the soldiers, their own brothers who are defending the country, in the name of our people who badly require transport and industries to run to meet their own requirements; appeal in the name of the country to develop production and not to stop it—these will prevent the vicious circle of settlement and strikes.

Our unions in the past have several times warned the workers against strikes; the workers have always listened to the call of their

organisation just as they are doing to-day. It is only the voice of their organisation that is not firmly warning them in every strike, on every occasion, that to strike is antinational. That is why some comrades think that it is not possible even to keep organised workers from strikes.

### **Day-To-Day Demands**

Comrades who ask whether this policy does not lead to abandonment of immediate demands think that a strike can be an instrument of defending workers' interests. They think that by banning strikes we are removing our only sanction to enforce economic demands. They would like at least the threat of a strike to be kept to hold production for ransom.

By our own logic the pistol of strike is not directed either at the bureaucracy or the employers, but at the workers themselves and their country, since production must continue for national defence.

When the role of every strike, no matter what its cause, is to stop production, why should there be such confusion?

Because once again the old outlook persists, and in that outlook direct action plays a big role in defending workers' interests.

*It, however, fails to see that the weapons of one period cannot be transferred to another period. In the past we were able to defend workers' interests not simply because we organised strikes but because it was politically correct to organise strikes and through them defend the day-to-day demands.*

To-day strikes do not organise workers, they only disorganise them. We require new sanctions, new weapons to defend the interests of the workers. This new weapon is found in workers' unity and initiative to lead and organise production and transport despite all provocations. I.e., the defence of day-to-day demands is found in exactly the contrary direction—not in stoppage but in efficient functioning of the production machine.

### **How Is It Done?**

What pressure is exercised through production and unity based on it?

(1) The more workers discharge their patriotic job of developing production, the more unitedly they do it in spite of all odds, the



more successfully they isolate the selfish employer and the bureaucracy.

The policy of the employer more and more stands unmasked as selfishness at the cost of the nation, of his country. It no longer remains an issue between the employers and employees but becomes one between the people and selfish employers. It enables the workers to unite the people behind themselves.

(2) Similarly it isolates the bureaucracy with its policy of no concession as far as possible.

(3) It forges stronger and stronger unity of workers themselves, because it is based on conscious realisation of their duty towards the country—a higher consciousness.

(4) This unity, far stronger than in ordinary strikes, enables the workers to exert the full pressure of politically conscious men through normal channels.

(5) This pressure of workers, doing their patriotic job against all odds and backed by the people whose battle they fight, becomes irresistible. It compels the Government to give up its policy of hostility towards workers' demands and to intervene in the dispute.

Here there is no opportunity for the fifth columnist, nor of falling a victim to the policy of the bureaucracy or employers; but there is an opportunity for conscious and patient building of strength for one's country, for production and on that strength securing the immediate demands.

Nobody suggests that it is an easy battle. Undoubtedly there will be provocation, victimisation and every kind of repression. But in the end nothing will count before the unbounded initiative of the workers to lead production for the army and the people.

By strikes you will only play the game of your enemy.

Our attitude towards strikes, therefore, has nothing to do with Royism nor is it an abandonment of the defence of workers day-to-day interests. It relies on the workers, on the people, and on their patriotism to secure better conditions for them.

The confusing stand hitherto taken towards strikes was born out of the same nationalist pro-struggle-pro-pressure deviation. We must give it up once for all if the mass of workers under our leadership are to be properly guided to take their place in the battle for defence and production.

### **Non-Political Ideas**

How far certain comrades strayed from a correct approach to strikes can be seen from the following. All understood that it was wrong to strike; but few put it as a straight political question connected with the defence of our country.

In asking the workers to resume work some comrades took resort to law and informed the workers that since the strike was illegal they should resume work. All that the workers thought was that strike with notice would be perfectly justifiable.

On the same score workers were frightened with police repression, i.e., disruption through strikes was presented as police repression against individuals. In other cases avoidance of strikes was confused with mere going through all the formalities of conciliation procedure and then awaiting big results to turn up.

All these have nothing in common with our policy which takes its stand on the basic need of national defence and production and estimates the role of strikes in reference to that.

Such explanations are opportunist and alienate the working class from our patriotic policy of more and better production.

Comrades, it is now easy to understand why we have not yet succeeded in launching a big mass drive for production for defence and freedom. As on the political plane while we fought the fifth columnist, secured notable successes in keeping production going. We suffered from the same left nationalist deviation which either masqueraded as defence of economic interests, conditional support to production, or indulgence towards strikes, etc. It is this which prevented us from putting across our political line in an inspiring manner and from moving our class into action for defence and production, though we achieved big successes in routing fifth columnist disruptors and keeping production going.

We were unable to make the turn and launch a workers' counter-offensive on the production front because of this, with the result that we are in the midst of a production crisis. The rectification of these mistakes will give us the requisite strength to overcome all our weaknesses.

## **V. PRODUCTION POLICY IN ACTION**

While the production crisis can be finally liquidated only by a National Government, which alone can effectively organise national

production, the resolution suggests immediate steps which must be taken to implement our policy to organise effective and efficient production and transport.

What are they ?

- (1) 100 per cent unionism and winning recognition of Trade Unions and mill and factory committees
- (2) Formation of Joint Production Committees
- (3) Production Conferences

### **Hundred Per Cent Unionism**

Comrades, the trade union movement is the main instrument of realising our policy.

The weakness of trade union movement means weakness of the drive for production and national defence. Every worker outside the Trade Union means a raw recruit, yet to be trained — a recruit who may misdirect his shot against his fellow-workers, against production itself.

More than ever, therefore, it is necessary that there should be hundred per cent unionism, because without that there will be no implementing of our policy on a mass scale. The entire class has to be moved for production and for that the lever is 100% unionism and nothing less.

We who have built the T.U. movement for the last fifteen years must answer this call for 100% organisation—our call to the workers then is: "join the Trade Union for defence and production and win your demands."

To-day class-unity through Trade Unions has only this meaning. The Trade Unions must become mass-mobilisers for production drives. They must move the workers for more and more production and through that secure their demands. Only thus can Trade Union unity be realised as part of the struggle for national defence.

The workers are, to-day, groaning under intolerable burdens. The cost of living is piling up. The lag between wages and prices widens. Adequate dearness allowance, wages, bonus, etc., are the demands put forward everywhere. It is the responsibility of the Trade Unions to win these demands and protect the workers against the policy of the employers and Government. Unity for production and 100% unionism are our basic weapons for organising the workers in vast mass Unions and winning their demands. *It is on*

*the strength of this hundred per cent mass mobilisation that we want to eliminate strikes.*

The securing of recognition for Trade Unions, for its committees, assumes vital significance in this connection. They become big weapons to organise the workers for more and more production for victory against the invader. They allow us to avoid all friction between management and workers and still further help to eliminate all strikes.

Trade Unions, however, cannot organise production unless their members and militant organisers make it a part of their daily activity and show the way to the mass of workers. Party members, Trade Union leaders, militants, all have to seize the initiative to improve and expand production. *By their political propaganda* and practical production work they must lead the mass of workers to become efficient workers, and to contribute their maximum to the country's defence.

The field of their actual work is, of course, the factory, the workshop, or unit of production. All their propaganda and agitation are tested here by the practical results they produce, by the number of workers they set in motion to tackle concretely problems of production.

Today for each industry the concrete problem is how to avoid waste, to economise spare parts, secure adequate raw materials, improve processes and methods which will yield better results. It also means eliminating absenteeism, doing away with the wastage of time, and rousing the worker to contribute his best to production. It is an undoubted fact that under present conditions of capitalist production, with low wages and intolerable conditions of living, there is no incentive to the worker to contribute to the full capacity of his skill; and that production will take a big leap forward if our propaganda encouraged them to do it.

On the railways it means (a) first and foremost, saving of coal used for locomotives—to-day when there is tremendous shortage of coal, when factories close down for want of it, every piece of coal saved on the railways is vital contribution to our defence and production ; (b) quick repair of locomotives and wagons which can partially offset the acute shortage; (c) checking and doing away with wastage of wagons, economising wagons space and seeing that it is utilised for urgent and vital transport; (d) increased

production of munitions, other war materials and railway stock in workshops, etc

In the textiles also the problem is the same, and the workers must take the initiative in removing all obstacles to increased production

Bad raw material, which keeps down production, partial working of looms due to shortage of yarn, looms lying idle because of chaotic management—all this waste of our productive power must be removed

The workers must take the lead in eliminating absenteeism, in saving wastage of time during working hours, in avoiding waste of raw materials, in increasing their skill and efficiency to give increased output and in suggesting improvements in machinery and processes which will raise production

Wherever possible they must take a lead in demanding working of three shifts so that machinery can run for all the 24 hours and production can increase. They should secure the support of the people for this

To-day one of the main tasks that faces them is to save the cloth production and control scheme from sabotage, to see that every loom and spindle is utilised in furtherance of the scheme, to suggest improvements in the scheme itself and solve all problems on the spot which are likely to arise in implementing the scheme (quicker supply of yarn, etc.) Their initiative will determine whether there is to be production of cheap cloth for all or not, whether the new scheme is to go the way of the old standard cloth project or whether it is to be improved and implemented so that increased production satisfies the demand of our people for cheap cloth

It is obvious that all this cannot be achieved by a few shock troopers and a few Party members or T U militants. The entire number working in the factory or industry must participate to make this drive a success. It is the collective experience, and knowledge of all workers that can locate every obstacle and suggest improvements. It is their joint co-operation and determination that can implement them

Workers in other industries have to follow the same path and come forward to improve production in the most practical manner

To begin with, advance workers must take the lead in forming workers' vigilance and production committees. The immediate task

of these committees will be to protect the factory against sabotage and slow down movement; to bring to light all cases of inefficiency on the part of the management, hold-ups, failure to utilise full capacity of industry and sabotage practiced by the employers out of considerations of profit; to make concrete suggestions and take steps to overcome all these as suggested above.

The advance workers will soon be able to draw in and enthuse the entire mass of workers, the more decisively they lead them through discussions, conferences and active steps to promote production. The latter will realise, through their own experience, that, organisation of production gives them an entirely new grip over the management and enables them to protect their interests while serving the nation. Every step forward in building production will mean greater and greater enthusiasm on the part of the workers.

### **Difficulties In The Way**

No doubt there will be many difficulties in our way. Selfish employers will oppose any initiative on the part of the workers and will even victimise those who take a lead. They, like the Government, are afraid of workers' initiative; to them increased production means less profits and, therefore, they will do their utmost to defeat all initiative..

To take but one instance, the textile owners, who in the past have sabotaged all plans of standard cloth and who today intend to blow up the cloth control scheme which touches their profits, are certainly not going to tolerate any initiative on the part of the workers.

The superior officer, whether in private industry or Government managed concerns like the railways, will be yet another opponent of increased production. His conservatism and contempt for workers, his non-political approach and in some cases his fifth columnism, and finally his false pride as an expert and fear of exposure of his expert knowledge before his employers, make him adopt a hostile attitude towards everything coming from the workers and sabotage every improvement or suggestion made by them. Even where the employers are favourable, the opposition of the supervisory officers will often succeed in sabotaging production plans and setting the employer against the workers, unless the latter are vigilant and learn to counter every move of theirs.

And finally, there is the hostility, opposition and indifference of the Government. The bureaucracy is afraid of encouraging the initiative of the workers: it is afraid of the employers' sabotage and, therefore, seeks not to offend them in any scheme of production: it will not, therefore, encourage workers' initiative to which the employers are opposed: besides it is itself afraid of the workers.

All these hurdles have to be crossed through the unity of the workers, of the people, by positive action to develop production. The resistance of all these forces will be broken when workers decisively march forward to organise production.

We must remember that while we have to overcome the resistance of the employers, officers and bureaucracy, we have at the same time to secure their co-operation for improving production. *Our slogan of Joint Production Committee demands a tripartite co-operation.* While, therefore, mercilessly exposing all sabotage or disorganisation for sake of profiteering, we must at the same time appeal to the patriotism of the employers to follow a patriotic policy. We must win over the patriotic superior officers to join us.

We must welcome every help coming from the employers and the officers, every facility given by them, as a triumph of our patriotic policy: our criticism and exposure should not make it difficult for patriotic employers to co-operate with us. All co-operation given by them must be duly acknowledged and given its proper place when we estimate our success.

Any tendency to regard production as the job of workers only and ignore the role the management can play is wrong and harmful.

### **Joint Production Committees**

Comrades, we have already seen that the production crisis deepens, because there is no co-operation between industry and Government, between workers and employers.

There has been no joint effort to evolve any order out of the present chaos. Neither the Government nor the owners were able to pull off a single plan, the standard cloth plan for instance.

It is obvious that production cannot be set on its feet, and cannot be developed unless the employers, workers and government plan jointly and work it out.

The slogan of joint Production Committees is our main slogan of organisation on the production front. It is a slogan which ensures co-ordination and co-operation between the three parties and without such co-ordination no systematic production is possible.

To implement it is not ordinary thing. It is to be implemented on the basis of workers' initiative and strength. The employers are opposed to it on the ground that the Joint Committees might meddle with the internal management of the industry.\* The Government is not eager to draw on the initiative of workers. The latest excuse of both the Government and employers to deny these Committees is that they might interfere with wage questions.

It is by overcoming these difficulties that we have to establish Joint Production Committees, which will secure proper co-operation between the three parties. Unless we are able to launch a mass movement for production, unless hundreds of workers start on their job of improving production, unless the representatives inside factories function to co-ordinate workers' initiative and show actual results, there will be no Joint Production Committees accepted by employers or Government.

The establishment of a Joint Production Committee means that the workers have produced results, have won the people to their side and with the aid of these results made it difficult for employers or Government to refuse to recognise the efficiency of such committees.

To get Joint Production Committees established in all industries and concerns is our reply to the present chaos. in which instead of co-operation friction exists ; it is our main weapon to forge ahead with national production.

It is through them that we solve production difficulties on the spot, avoid waste and save spare parts. which in itself will be a big contribution in India; encourage individual initiative to make improvements in the process of production; arrange for special bonuses and payments for new improvements and suggestions—in short, tackle production concretely.

The function of these Committees is really to organise production; it should not be mixed with the question of wages or other disputes.

The popularisation and realisation of Joint Production Committees is one of our basic tasks without which we will not be able to implement our policy.



## **Production Conferences**

*Immediately we have to mobilise the workers through production conferences. These conferences are our preparatory mass mobilisation for our production drive.*

To be successful you must have politically convinced the workers that production is their patriotic duty. You must have inspired them with the thought that they hold the most vital trust of the nation in their hands.

To produce actual results these conferences must be preceded by a thorough discussion among advanced workers, Party members and militants, on the problem facing each industry, the technical difficulties, difficulties of raw materials, etc.

It is only on the basis of this that a concrete plan can be made—a plan to be immediately implemented by workers or jointly by the three parties. As a matter of fact such a plan should be ready long before the conference takes place : its discussion should be arranged among the workers; and the conference should meet to discuss and endorse the plan. This will make the conference a body that gives a call to action and not merely a deliberative body.

The decisions of the conference should be vigorously pursued in the factories by our T U and Party members, etc

These production conferences may be of departments, of an individual factory or of the entire industry

Comrades, we are in the midst of one of the gravest situations.

*The National Crisis deepens every day* paralysing our striking power against the invader. It is accompanied by the food and production crises, threatening the nation with complete collapse of its economic life and defence.

The fifth column, the advance guard of the Japanese militarists, exploits the situation.

The bureaucracy remains impervious to the danger: the patriot refuses to see it.

We have been battling against this menacing situation ever since the outbreak of the crisis.

On the political front we defeated the fifth column and foiled its game of sabotage and anarchy.

On the production front we kept production going and defeated its treacherous attempt to paralyse the defence and economic life of the country.

But we have not yet started on our main job of organising production, the key base of national defence.

The political resolution calls upon us to correct our past mistake and seize upon production as the main lever for mobilising our class for our policy of unity for national defence, for national government, for solution of the deadlock and release of leaders.

The working class has to fulfil its role as the unifier of the people in the anti-fascist struggle for liberation. It has to unite the people behind itself for the common task of national defence. By championing production, by organising and expanding it for the army, for the people, the working class unites itself and the nation, serves itself and the country as well.

The word must go from this Congress to the 300,000 organised by us in Trade Unions, to the hundreds of thousands who are under our influence; to the railway, textile, iron, coal and other workers to fight the battle of our freedom inside pits and factories, workshops and mills. Efficient transport, increased production, maximum efficiency for national defence and freedom—these are our slogans for our patriotic working-class. This is the way to fight the battle of world freedom shoulder to shoulder with the great Red Army and the Soviet working-class, with the Chinese Army and the people of China.

## FIRST PARTY CONGRESS OF C.P.I.

### — RESOLUTIONS, GREETINGS & HOMAGE

#### **We Raise the Clenched Fist to Our Martyrs**

During the last 15 years of its life, the Communist Party of India has drawn to itself the best sons of the people. The best of the workers, of the peasants, of the intellectuals, are more and more coming to see in the Party the stoutest champion of the people, foremost fighter for the freedom of the country.

Enemies of the people are, therefore, sparing no efforts to cut the Party at its very roots. Every Communist has had to carry on a consistent struggle against these enemies of the people, many have laid down their lives in this sacred struggle. In memory of all such comrades who have become martyrs to the cause of Communism and who, by their death-defying devotion to the working class and the people, have built up the Party to its present position, this, the First Congress of the Communist Party of India pays its homage and raises its clenched fist.

Comrade Jagu Adhikari was a Marxist intellectual who spared no efforts in taking Marxism to the Bombay working-class, thus laying the basis for Communism in India. Most of the young workers of the early years who have to-day become respected leaders of the Bombay working class were trained by him. The never-ending strain of the work of pioneer Communists told on his health; already weak with haemophilia, he died a martyr's death. The Congress pays homage to him.

The Congress pays its homage to its worker martyrs : To Comrade Palan, a worker in General Motors, who in his young age rose to be a member of the Central Committee and braved torture that gave him T. B. and led to his untimely death. To Comrade Haris, the beedi worker, who rose to be a member of the Calcutta District Committee, served as an underground organiser to the

coalworkers of Asansol and to the steel workers of Jamshedpur, got typhoid through the rigours of underground life and against whom the bureaucracy refused to withdraw the warrant even for his admission into the hospital. To Venkateshwar Rao, the founder-leader of the Andhra Press Workers' Union, who was honoured with the task of organising the all-India illegal press of the Party, not only successfully executed the task that kept the press safe; but the rigour and strain led to his contracting T.B. he died with the calm and courage of a true proletarian hero.

Comrade Somen Chanda of Dacca, a student comrade and progressive writer of great promise was stabbed by the agents of Jap fascism. Comrade Golam Sarif of Chittagong, a docker comrade, was killed by Jap bombs while sticking to his post of duty. Comrade Umabhai of Ahmedabad was killed by a police bullet on 9th August while dissuading the enraged people of Ahmedabad from acts of anarchy and sabotage. All of these embodied the new spirit of patriotism which our Party takes to the India people, for freedom through the defence of our Motherland. The Congress pays homage to them.

The four Kayyur comrades who mounted the gallows with the revolutionary message of patriotic national defence on their lips represent the best sons of kisans whom the Party claims as its own. The Congress pays homage to them and pledges itself to carry out their last testament.

Rigours of revolutionary life, tortures of imperialist repression, police bullets and lathis, the traitorous knives of the Fifth Column—these have been and are the lot of every Communist. Many have fallen victims to these. To every one of such communist martyrs, named and unnamed, the Congress pays its revolutionary homage.

*The Congress declares that the martyrdom of these comrades is a source of constant and undying inspiration to every living Communist in India. The memory of our martyrs shall inspire every Party Member to always seek to serve the interests of our people whose best sons they were. The memory of our martyr: shall inspire us to defend our motherland for which they shed their blood. The memory of our martyrs*

*shall inspire us to act as tireless builders of national unity, to win National Government for the defence of our own country, to rally the entire Indian community to fight shoulder to shoulder with freedom-loving humanity, for the cause of world freedom.*

### **To Our Gallant Fighters of the Indian Army**

The First Congress of Communist Party of India sends patriotic greetings to the thousands of young Indians who have joined the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force. Several of them have already distinguished themselves in the battles against the fascist aggressors in East and West Africa, Iran and Burma, and helped to defend India and Asia from the fate of fascist enslavement.

The Fourth India Division has now become world famous as the force which took a leading part in the final annihilation of the fascist armies in Africa.

To all these and to the others who are now defending the Assam and Bengal borders, the Congress sends it fraternal greetings

The Congress dips its banner to the memory of those Indian soldiers who have fallen in the fight against fascism and thus defended their country with their very lives.

These gallant sons of India, together with their British and American comrades, have so far kept the enemy away from our sacred soil. The job which they are doing to-day is a job which every patriotic Indian Party wants to get done—defend our hearths and homes from the fascists. With their bodies they are keeping back the fascist hordes from our frontiers and giving us time to unite and win National Government. Their example will show the peoples of the United Nations what an India with her 400 millions fully mobilised under her own National Government could do. It is by defending India and going out to fight the fascists that they are making their contribution to our common task of winning National Government.

This Congress pledges itself to do its utmost to rally the entire Indian people behind these soldier brothers of ours at the front, to give full support to their needs at the front, to strengthen the morale of our people in the rear ; to forge National unity as quickly as

possible and win National Government; to hasten the day when our entire people as one man shall hurl back the Jap invaders and march forward to a free Asia.

To the Red Army and Allied forces.

### **We Promise To Rally Our People Behind You**

The First Congress of Communist party of India sends fraternal greetings to the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of the Soviet Union. The heroic resistance to the Nazi hordes that it has been carrying on for the last 23 months has been of direct help to us in India in that it upset all the grand strategy of an Axis pincer movement against India from the west and east. Not only was the German arm of the pincer broken at the Caucasus but as a result of this, the Jap arm has been seriously crippled.

The Congress further greets the American, British, French, South African and other armies which dealt crushing blows at the fascist aggressors in Africa and the Middle East and thus finally removed the fascist threat to India from the West.

The Congress greets the British and American forces which are guarding our eastern frontiers and preparing themselves for an offensive against Jap fascism which alone will finally remove the threat to our Motherland.

The Congress greets the Chinese, Australian and New Zealand forces and the great American Navy which are engaging the Jap forces and thus reducing their capacity for invading our land. These forces are preparing themselves for a powerful counter-offensive against the Japs for finally saving us from the menace of aggression.

The Congress assures all these forces and the peoples who are rallied behind them that the Communist Party of India will leave no stone unturned to rally the entire Indian people behind these armies for struggle against World Fascism.

**To Our Chinese Brother :**

**Your lofty example of national unity inspires us**

The First Congress of the Communist Party of India greets the great Chinese people whose heroic armies are to-day pinning down

the largest part of Japan's invading armies and holding back the Japanese enslavers of Asia.

We greet our great brother party, the Communist party of China, and pledge ourselves that the lofty lesson of national unity in defence of the Motherland learnt by the Chinese after the loss of five provinces to the invader, will be made the common property of all of India's patriots. The Communist Party of India realises that national unity alone will enable us to defend our country with the matchless heroism of the Chinese people, to win us a National Government for our defence and to launch a successful counter-offensive into Burma in order that our own country may be secure, that we may link up with China, and that India, China and all the United Nations together may sweep off the Japanese militarists from Asia and liberate the people of Japan from their yoke.

*The Communist party of India is grateful for the solidarity of the Chinese people and the solicitude of the Chinese Government towards India's demand for a National Government.*

The Communist Party of India, fighting with all its might the Fifth Column agents inside our country of the fascist invader, is trying to ensure that our patriots unite and that the Fifth Column traitors are unmasked before them as the enemies of our people as well as of our heroic Chinese brethren.

We pledge ourselves to the great Chinese people to fight with all our power so that India will not lie prostrate, unable to play its role in the world people's war against fascism, but will march shoulder to shoulder with China for a Free India and a Free China in a Free Asia and a Free World.

*The Congress calls upon the Central Committee of the Party to make arrangements for raising a Volunteer Medical Unit in India for work with the Chinese army at Yennan and at Chungking and thus continue the traditions of solidarity between our two peoples which was initiated by the Indian National Congress.*

**Solemn vow to campaign for those behind the bars**

From the platform of its First Congress, the Communist Party of India greets its seven hundred comrades who are held behind the prison bars.

On 9th August we had 413 comrades in jail. Since then 300 more have been locked in by the bureaucracy because they agitated and worked for the release of Congress leaders, because they fought for food for the people, because they united the people.

The policy and practice of our Party which these comrades unhesitatingly supported and carried out, is to defend the country against the fascist invader, to fight the fifth column, to stop sabotage and to unite the patriots for national defence. The arrest of Communists and repression against the Party only helps the Fifth Column, but the bureaucracy is blindly oblivious of this.

The Communist Party greets the 105 comrades who are each serving out life sentences in different prisons of India. Among them are Ganesh Ghose, Ananta Singh and the rest of the Cittagong heroes, Provat Chakravarty, Nalini Das and other well-known revolutionary leaders of Bengal, amongst them is Ananda Gupta, almost on death-bed and yet kept in prison. All these are comrades whose names are a legend of patriotism to the people of the province, who in the early years of their jail life came over to Communism and the Communist Party by assimilating their own patriotic experience in the light of Marxism and who recently, even from behind the bars, have sent out their mighty call to the people of Bengal to unite in the holy war against fascist aggression. Amongst them is K.P.R. Gopalan, the hero of Malabar, Mula Pokan, the Malabar Kisans' own son and 15 others from the Mattanur, Morazha and Kayyur cases. Amongst them are Gayaprasad and Kapur, Bhagat Sing's own comrade, amongst them is Baba Gurumukh Singh, pioneer patriot of fearless courage, and amongst them is Chacha Jan Mohammad, the leader and patriarch of the Cawnpore working class.

*We greet all the comrades and take the solemn pledge that we shall work unceasingly for their release and shall not rest till they are back in our midst.*

The Congress calls upon all Party units to conduct specialised agitation for the release of each one of the above comrades; *to rouse that whole of Bengal* to agitate for the release of Ganesh Ghose and others so that they may unite and lead bombed Chittagong to defend the frontiers of Bengal against the rapidly advancing Japanese



hordes, to rouse the whole of the working class of Cawnpore to bring back their beloved Chacha to inspire and organise them into ever greater production for national defence; *to rouse entire Malabar* to demand back their best sons when every son and daughter of Malabar is needed to drive off the threat of invasion from its shores; *to mobilise all the Punjabis* in demanding back their pioneer patriot-leader Baba Gurumukh Singh and others in order that the soldier sons of the Punjab may be inspired to ever greater patriotic fury against the fascists who come to enslave our motherland.

The agitation for the release of these prisoners and the general agitation of the Party for the release of Congress prisoners will combine into a mighty movement which is sure to break down the barriers of repression and give back to India all her patriotic sons.

This Congress authorises the Central Committee to form a Prisoners' Aid Committee, with Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna, as President, and Comrade Parvati Kumaramangalam, as Secretary, which shall organise a Fund (Red Prisoners' Aid Fund) for the relief of such prisoners and observe March 29 (the day on which the Kayyur comrades were hanged) as Red Prisoners' Aid Day all over India.

## MASS RALLY IN BOMBAY

—25,000 workers salute first Congress  
of the Communist Party.

It was the evening of the 23rd of May.

The Kamgar Maidan was the focal point of attraction in the labour area of Bombay for 25 thousand workers with their wives and children, and a smaller number of sympathisers of the Communist Party. The maidan was decked in festive garb. Red Flags were everywhere. A huge dais had been erected and on it were placed portraits of Stalin, Gandhiji, Jinnah Saheb and P.C. Joshi, big enough to be clearly visible from the other end of the Maidan. Nearly a hundred and fifty blackboards carried slogans in seven languages : English, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi Gujarati, Malayalam, and Telugu. They lined the Maidan on all sides. The slogans, written in bold letters with coloured chalk, called upon the people to defend our motherland, to campaign for release of national leaders, to accept the fight of self-determination and thus through Congress-League Agreement win a National Government. The workers and kisans were exhorted to strengthen their unions and their sabhas in order to increase production and to grow more food. There were appeals to Students and India's womanhood. There were slogans like "Forward to a mass Communist Party", "Make Calcutta a second Stalingrad" and "Clear Burma of the Japs to help the Chinese."

On the dais were seated the Presidium and the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. There were distinguished visitors too. Sjt. Vaikunt Mehta, Secretary of the All India Village Industries Association, Sjt. Syed Abdullah Brelvi, Editor, Bombay Chronicle, Senapati Bapat, prominent Ahrar leader of the city, Dr. Shaukat Ansari, Secretary of the Azad Muslim Conference, Mr. Satyen Mazumdar, the ex-Editor of the Anand Bazar Patrika, were present.

## Sundarabai

And there was the eighty-year old worker woman Sundarabai, now practically blind, but her spirit quite as undaunted as ever before. What were her thoughts today as she sat on the dais and tried eagerly to pick up every word that fell from the speakers as she probed her companions with thousands of questions about the sight which her old tired eyes could no more register ?

“I am a daughter of the working-class. It is my Party’s Congress that I have come to attend.

“It was 1928 when we had that first great upheaval, the great strike of textile workers of Bombay. The Nagu-yaji Wadi meetings used to be as full of thunder as these. But somehow things were not of the type they are to-day. We only knew the Girni Kamgar Union then. We knew the Red flag, we knew Soviet Russia, we knew our Dange. But we did not know the working-class party. The Communists were just being born then. Dange and Ranadive and Deshpande led us. But they were young then, though full of fire. How I remember their burning phrases. I remember 1929 when near Currey Road we women snatched the pistol out of the hands of the Police Commissioner himself and frightened the whole police force into hasty and precipitate retreat, leaving their just-arrested prisoners, Ranadive and Deshpande behind. Yes, we the working class of Bombay, have given birth to our beloved Communist Party. We have fought for it. We have shed our blood to keep up its prestige. We have sent our sons and husbands to jails and even to the gallows to save the honour of the Red Flag, to build the party of the working-class. To-day my eyes fill with tears of joy. You let me listen to my Dange. Yes, I feel certainly like a mother to him. He is my son, as every one of the Communists.”

And Sundarabai began to listen, as the proceedings began.

The cultural squad from Bengal, led by the brilliant Benoy Roy, sang two inspiring songs, Comrade Oak Came forward and introduced the Presidium. “Comrades Dange and Muzaffar Ahmad, as the founders of the Party, are on the Presidium; Comrade Bhayyaji Kulkarni is the oldest worker comrade, who has risen from the ranks to the status of the Secretaryship of the Maharashtra Provincial Party; Comrade Krishna Pillai is the most promising of

our cadres, one who has come from the Indian National Congress to the Communist Party and helped to build one of the finest Provincial Parties in India : Comrade Manikuntala Sen is the best woman organiser in Calcutta and incidentally in India; Comrade D.S. Vaidya comes to us from the railway workers, the staunchest and the best, who has made his leap from pure trade unionism to Communism—he is to-day the Secretary of the Bombay Committee; Comrade Nergis Batliwala is the best student organiser and one of the most promising of our cadres.”

Thunderous cheers greeted the announcement of the Presidium as each one came forward and saluted the meeting with clenched fist.

Comrade Dange read out the messages received from the Communist parties of Great Britain, and South Africa. Harry Pollitt, R. Palme Dutt, William Rust and William Gallacher, MP., declared:

“The demand of the hour is for renewed efforts by both Indian and British peoples together to end the impasse, to secure release of political prisoners and open negotiations for a National Government in India, an ally of the United Nations. We pledge our efforts for an intensive campaign to rally labour and democratic opinion here in order to change the policy of the Government....”

### **Flag Hoisting**

Majestic Bankim Mukherji, the President of the All-India Kisan Sabha now came forward to unfurl the flag.

“The Party we have built up is not the result of compromises and patch-work. It is built up out of our flesh and blood. We have sacrificed for it in the past and we are ready to sacrifice all we have for its future development..... The Red Flag has been dyed with blood over and over again by the precious blood of martyrs and we pledge ourselves to these martyrs that we shall never rest for a moment till we plant the Red Flag in the highest seats of power..... Japan threatens our land to-day. Let Japan beware. Our Red Flag shall mobilise the masses of India to rise against the foul invaders and reduce the fascists into dust. The Japanese, let them beware ! If they dare to foul our soil, the Red Flag promises to use them as fertiliser for our exhausted soil.....”

We went over to the flag pole and unfurled the flag. The meeting heaved with emotion.

Then Comrade Draupadibai, one of the seven women workers in Bombay who are party members, came forward on behalf of the workers of Bombay and greeted the Congress.

This is a big Congress session. The Party is the third largest Party in India. How could I, a poor toiler in the textile mills, have ever secured this privilege of talking to you from the platform except at the Congress of the Party which is of the working class — our own Party : To-day is the day of our greatest pride and joy. The Bombay working-class gave birth to the Communist Party. We welcome it back after fifteen years of illegality at its first legal Congress. The Party has become a mass Party, a huge machine. It leads not only the working class of India but also the struggle for freedom of our nation.....

“We seven women workers who are Party members vow that very soon there will be at least 700 more women workers inside the Party.”

Long and re-sounding slogans from the audience echoed her greetings. The workers of Bombay were underlining everyone of the sentiments she had expressed on their behalf.

### **Dange Speaks**

Then came Com. Dange's main speech of the evening.

Sundarabai was mumbling : “This Dange, he was a young lad in 1928. Now he is an all-India leader. The Communists were not even a dozen then. Now they number 15,500. The working class was just asserting itself on the trade union field in those days. Now we are leading the country, are we not.”

But Dange had already begun to speak. In his quiet way, he went on piling sentence on sentence, leading the listener to the irresistible conclusion :

“The Communist Party is the Party of the working class. You gave birth to it, you nurtured and protected it by the fights you fought for it, by your unflinching support of the Red Flag. To-day your child has grown big, and spread all over India.....In 1928, we founded a mass Union of Textile Workers. Today in 1943 we register the founding of a mass political party of the working class. It is this party that shall lead us in all our battles, against the internal as against the external foes.....

This is a historic occasion when thousands have gathered to salute their own Party, the Communist Party.....

“You Bombay workers are justly proud of the growing Party, But at the same time I must remind you that out of 15,000 Party members Bombay has contributed only 450. Other Provinces have forged ahead, they have grown faster than you. We must make up this lag. Thousands of you must immediately join the Party.”

Cheers greeted his words. The workers were glorying in the past with legitimate pride. There was lustre in their eyes, sparks of the unquenchable fire lighted by the heroic struggles and privations of years.

### **Dange Continued :**

“The communists were a handful in the 1928 textile strike and yet we routed Mayekar and Co. How and why? Because the Communists came to you with the inspiring objective of freedom for our country and workers’ and peasants’ raj; we came to you with the programme of unity of Hindus and Muslims, touchable and untouchable workers, in the common fight for Socialism and the abolition of Capitalism. That was the meaning of the Red Flag. I told you about the Soviet, May Day, Marx, Lenin, and the Russian Revolution, how the workers of the world were to unite, and what was internationalism. We gave you your paper, *The Kranti*, which taught you the politics of revolution and freedom... . The Government tried to deflect us from our path again and again. In the Meerut Conspiracy Case sentences ranged as high as twenty and ten years. But Communists did not waver. Papa Miya was sentenced to the gallows. He never wavered. Our aim was steadily in front of us : Freedom for our country at all costs—Socialism, our final goal. Your courage and your suffering are unforgettable. Your strikes are epics of bravery. For your political faith, for your faith in Communism, you have braved many terrors which you could have easily averted otherwise. You have thus inspired not merely your own ranks but all India.”

**The meeting was visibly moved.**

**Now Dange struck another note :**

“It has been our lot to be slandered again and again. In 1930 we were slandered for showing the correct path to the people. We defended the interests of the workers and the peasants. All we received was foul slander from the bourgeois press.

“After 9th August, again the same weapon has been employed against us. We were called traitors. But what did we do :

“We did not care to reply by words, We kept to deeds. We stuck to our policies. We stuck to unity. We stuck to defence. And we agitated for the release of the national leaders. This is our path of work.”

In fifteen years, the Communist Party has brought the workers and kisans to the forefront of the national struggle, made them the real masters of India.

“This is your triumph. How was it achieved ? Your Party was guided by Marxism, by Lenin and Stalin, inspired by the working class of the U.S.S.R.. because we never forgot we were a part of the international army, because we never forgot our duty to our people and our country ....

“From a trickle we have become a roaring torrent. To-day the best sons and daughters of our people are in our ranks. To-day the most hardened political fighters are our members. To-day every honest fighter for freedom is converging towards the line of the Party. In this hour of trial, we pledge to you that we shall leave no stones unturned to live up to our highest tradition of service and sacrifice for the freedom of our country..... ”

### Scenes of tremendous enthusiasm prevailed.

The whole audience stood up to sing the *Internationale*.

And as the meeting was dispersing Sundarabai was telling some women workers : “I am a lucky woman. I do not mind dying now. I shall die in peace. I know that my sons and daughters are grown up and nothing on earth can stop them from going higher and attaining more and more power.”

As the Bombay workers marched home, thousands of minds registered the same thoughts. The Communist Party has come to stay on the map of India. It has served its apprenticeship. It cannot be eradicated any more.

And the echoes re-sounded again and again from the walls of the buildings round about Kamgar Maidan :

“*Communist Party Zindabad*”.

## FIRST COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS

*TO MEET AT BOMBAY : What it means In the Life Of Our People And their Struggle To End The Deadlock*

*After 8 Years of illegality we will hold our first party congress from May 23 to June 1. We choose Bombay as the venue because it is the home of the Red Flag.*

The Bombay working-class is the mother of the Communist Party. It was by organising its mighty struggles, economic and political, that our cadres matured and got steeled as fit organisers of the people, and as patriotic fighters. From here they were able to take the Red Flag round the country, the every industrial centre and later on the countryside to organise Kisan Sabhas. After 15 years' devoted service of the people we meet in our first Party Congress rightly enough in Bombay.

### **We Serve Our People**

We are today a major political organisation in the life of our country, the third in the land, after the Congress and the League.

*Our Party Congress is not the concern of us Communists alone but of all patriots who love the people and want to do their bit to save our common motherland.*

We were the first patriotic organisation in the land to declare that when our country is threatened with Fascist aggression the path to our freedom lay only through successful national defence.

We were the only political organisation in the land to declare that National Unity alone will get us National Government for National Defence.

*We have campaigned for the right of self-determination for Muslim nationalities, irrespective of the attitude of the Muslim League leadership, so that today an average Muslim League patriot says, "If the Congress was as reasonable, Congress-League joint front would get established in 24 hours."*



*We have campaigned for the release of Congress leaders, irrespective of the slanderous campaign of Congressmen who had been humbugged by Fifth Column elements. so that today an average Congress patriot comes to ask us how we feel certain that the League will take up the demand of the release of the leaders and enter a united front with the Congress for national government if the Congress accepted self-determination.*

Form the position—"unity is impossible" our patriots in their own way, through their own experience, have come groping towards the position—"is unity possible?" and themselves express their willingness for unity.

Our Party kept production going while the whole country was going up in smoke.

Wherever our Party unit exists it works to get people food. We mobilise the people to move the bureaucrats. We work at the queues to prevent food riots. We unearth stocks and collar the hoarder.

### **What People Think of Us**

Our Party has grown as no political party has ever done before, through its patriotic policy and practical service of the people. During the last 10 months our fellow patriots have felt frustrated and the people demoralised. Not so within our ranks or among the people where we work. *Inside the Party ceaseless political education has gone on which has kept our comrades inspired and at their jobs among the people.* The people among whom we worked stand better united and more self-confident, better organised and stronger.

In the last 10 months our Party membership has increased about 4 times. The circulation of our organ has doubled; we bring out weeklies in 11 languages which reach 70 thousand buyers. On an average of 10 readers to a copy about 7 lac patriots read about our policy from week to week. We could quadruple the sales if we only had paper. Our pamphlets are the best sellers and each edition goes out of stock within 2 months.

The Trade Union movement had become weak through repression. Now, after our legality, we have not only put the Trade Unions on their feet but increased their membership all-round.

The kisan movement had been smashed. After winning our legality we rebuilt the Kisan Sabha and in its last session at

Bhakhna its membership figure was 3 lacs. In Bihar and Gujarat we share the kisan leadership with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Indulal Yagnik, and in all the other provinces our Party leads the organised kisans.

The All India Kisan Sabha and the All India Trade Union Congress unanimously elected our comrades, Bankim Mukherjee and S. S. Dange, as their Presidents respectively

The students who had been most provoked by repression now listen patiently to their Communist brothers. In several places Communist-Congress and even Communist-Congress-League students' unity has been forged and the treacherous Fifth Column isolated.

*In the threatened provinces of Bengal, Andhra and Malabar our girl comrades are leading a patriotic upsurge among women. About 50 thousand women have been organised behind the policy of the Party. The figure for women Party members from mere tens has risen to hundreds.*

We have grown and grown all-round. Our Party is stronger today than it ever was before. But our country is in dire peril, engulfed in the throes of a deepening all-round crisis.

### **Who Will Attend ?**

The delegates to the Congress will review the situation in our country and define our patriotic policy.

There will be 135 delegates drawn from all the provinces, representing all generations of the Indian patriotic movement, from the 80-year old Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna who founded the Gadr Party, served a life-term and a couple of smaller ones and is yet going strong, to the 16-year old Kunhianandan from Malabar, the organiser of the Bala Sangham. About 98% of them will be whole-timers who from early youth sacrificed their all and work tirelessly as organisers of the people and builders of the Party.

The delegations will be representative of all classes. Over 20% will be actual workers, leaders of Bombay, Ahmedabad, Sholapur, and Cawnpur textiles; leaders of Railwaymen from the G. I. P., B.B. & C.I., S.I.R. and so on. Over 10% will be actual sons of peasants who built up the Kisan Sabha movement. From Mymensingh will come Jahiruddin, from Tippera Farid Khan, and others from Andhra, Malabar and the Punjab.

The delegates are drawn from all the minorities—about 15 Muslims, 8 Sikhs, 2 Parsis 3 Untouchables.

*About 13 of them will be girls and women, a higher percentage than attends the session of any other political organisation.*

### **What will be Discussed ?**

What will these delegates discuss and decide, during the 10 days they will meet from 23rd of May to 1st June?

—*To end the deadlock which spells the doom of our country.* viz., how to forge a united National Front of all patriotic organisations for National Government. How to get the Congress patriot accept the right of self-determination? How to get the League patriot campaign for the release of the Congress leaders?

How to get food for the people when the Government goes on inflicting paper-scheme after paper-scheme on the people which only strengthen the hoarder and lead not to food but to food riots.

How to inspire the working-class to increase production as their contribution to national defence?

How to inspire the kisan masses to grow more food to feed their own countrymen and the armies defending our motherland?

How to rouse our womanhood to regard national defence as the defence of their own honour from inhuman fascist torturers and baby-killers?

The decisions of our Party Congress will help to mould the life of our people because our Party is a major political Party, because our ranks consist of the best sons and daughters of our people, produced through the trials of their own struggles.

Together with the Party Congress will be held a Party Exhibition where the growth and strength of the Party on all fronts and in all provinces will be demonstrated through pictures, charts and diagrams and the policy of the Party will be put across through a whole series of artistic posters.

### **Cultural Squads**

Most of the delegations are bringing with them their own cultural squads. It will surprise the people of Bombay to see how our Party uses, for patriotic propaganda and organisation, the rich cultural heritage of our ancient land. Quite a number of young rising poets are inside the Party and they have composed community songs in

old folk tunes which keep peasant gatherings spell-bound for whole-night sessions in Bengal, Andhra and Malabar. Our anti-Jap patriotic crusade and kisan organisation has brought to the surface all the talent inherent in the kisan youth and they have transformed their folk-dances into anti-Jap dances. They will see the woman of Malabar dance *Kummi*, tiny daughters of peasant women from Chirakkal do a song-dance to perfect time and rhythm; they will see *Purakkali*, the old Nair warrior-dance, being danced by peasant youth from Kottaym to rouse our patriots for the defence of the motherland. From the land of Tagore and Bankim, Bengali boys and girls will sing choruses that have roused every audience that has listened to them. Andhra peasant women will do *Burrakatha* and the men will sing anti-fascist recitations such as the "Village Medicineman", "The Soothsayer" etc. We Communists use our past heritage to inspire our people to fulfil their present tasks so that our country may realise the desired future.

### **Programme**

The Party Congress will open at the Kamgar Maidan on May 23rd. On the 29th the historic maidan will see the grandest workers' patriotic festival when all the cultural squads will perform in open air, before them from 9. P. M. to 3 A. M. On 30th May a mass rally will be held when the decisions of the Party Congress will be put across to the working-class of Bombay. At Kamgar Maidan will be demonstrated the mobilising capacity of the Party in Bombay and the love, and devotion the working masses have for our Party. The workers of Bombay who were the first to unfurl the Red Flag will see for the first time, with their own eyes, children of the Red Flag, from all over India, who are organising the toilers in their own localities and uniting the people for food and freedom. They will see their own children, as it were, who have in many ways improved upon their own achievements.

## FULL REPORTING ON FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA\*

During the last week of May the Communist Party of India held its first Congress. The early group of pioneers was only 200 strong when the Party was banned in 1934. But they had already securely planted the Red Flag among the working class. They had organised mighty strike struggles, formed mass Trade Unions and initiated the crusade for a clear-cut national emancipatory programme based on mass mobilisation through mass organisations. The imperialist reactionaries banned the Party to throttle it at its very birth.

Exactly 8 years after when the Party won its legality its membership was about 5,000. It had helped to organise the Kisan and the student movement and was acknowledged on all hands as the most unified, disciplined, and hard-working team of young patriots. Repression could not kill the Party. We began as a working class group and despite illegality emerged as a national political force.

After legality (July 1942) repression did not cease. 700 Party members are behind the bars, another 105 are serving life-terms. From the very day of legality the Party faced its greatest handicap, a countrywide slander campaign organised by fellow patriots of the premier national organisation of the country. Despite this cross-fire we achieved a meteoric rise to 16,000 Party membership, by May Day 1943, an increase of 365%. Repression could not shackle us, slander failed to isolate us.

What has sustained and strengthened our Party! The undying fire of our patriotic policy, the clear-headed realism that comes from the acceptance and application of Marxism-Leninism.

We refused to sabotage the defence of our motherland just because the imperialist bureaucrats were acting as they would. The more we were repressed the more eloquently we roused the people

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*\*Reporting on the First Party Congress of C.P.I. as published in the Special Number of "PEOPLE'S WAR" of June 13, 1943.*

to realise that the way out of imperialist insolence and bureaucratic bungling was people's unity.

We did not allow provocation to swerve us from the path of our own patriotic duty to the Congress. The more Congressmen slandered us as pro-British, the harder we fought the imperialist slander that the Congress was pro-Jap. The more vituperative the Congressmen became against us the more humbly we went to persuade them that if they continue to sabotage the defence of the country India will get not freedom but fascism.

At our first Congress representatives of our entire Party met to review the Party policy.

We vowed to rouse India's millions to consider national defence as their own first concern while most of the Indian patriots were saying that nothing is possible so long as the British are here.

We vowed to make an all-out effort for the unity of the Congress and the League, to win a national government of national defence, while most of the Congress and League patriots doubted if the other side really wanted unity.

Who were the delegates who thus proudly took on to do the seemingly impossible?

They were 139 delegates representing 16,000 party members drawn from all classes of our great people, confirming our belief that the strength of our patriotic policy draws the best sons of the people into the ranks of the Party.

86 of the delegates were drawn from the intelligentsia, with not a single arm-chair theoriser among them. All had worked in the mass movement, popularised Marxism on a mass scale among the toilers, and been primarily responsible for transforming the Party from a group of Marxists working among the workers to a major political Party of the land. Among them were some of the best agitators, organisers and pamphleteers our patriotic movement has known.

22 were workers, the cream of 4000 worker members of the Party, who are the unquestioned Trade Union and political leaders of 3 lacs organised workers in their own localities.

25 were peasants, the best of the five and a half thousand peasant members of the Party, who have taken patriotism to the countryside and lead 4 lacs kisans organised in their own Sabhas.

3 were landlords, 2 petty landlords and one trader.

**THE CONGRESS OF NO OTHER PARTY DRAWS SUCH A VARIED DELEGATION, WITH SUCH A PREDOMINANCE OF THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE TOILING PEOPLE IN ITS LEADING RANKS BECAUSE NO OTHER PARTY IS SO NEAR THE PEOPLE**

All the minorities were represented : 13 were Muslims, 8 Sikhs, 3 untouchables, 2 Parsis, one Christian and one Jain. They had come to positions of Party and mass leadership through sheer merit strengthening our self-assurance that our Party represents the cause of universal justice.

13 were women delegates out of 700 girls and women in the ranks of the Party. No political gathering ever draws such a large proportion of women delegates, no political party except ours has 5% women membership in its ranks. These women and girl Communists have achieved what has never been done before in our Patriotic movement. They have organised 41 thousand women, drawn from all classes but primarily from the workers and peasants, into stable mass organisations.

About 70% of the delegates had served one or more terms behind the bars, and the aggregate worked out to 411 years. The longest term of 27 years was Baba Sohan Singh's. Half of the political career of the Party leaders had been spent inside jails. Two of the girls, Kalpana Dutt and Kamala Chatterjee had done 7 and 6 years each.

53% of the delegates had underground experience and in all they had spent 54 years working underground. The longest period naturally was of the organiser of the central apparatus who had lived safe and unknown for 10 years and next came the Party Secretary with his  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years.

Not one was illiterate. Some had learnt to read and write after joining the Party. 12 were non-English knowing, the rest bilingual, some of them workers and peasants who had painstakingly taught themselves English to be able to read Marx, Lenin and Stalin. 48 were matriculates and 57 graduates.

At one end was the 80 year old Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna from the Punjab and at the other the 16 year Kunhianandan, the bright Bal Sangham leader from Malabar. The delegation, though it constituted the leadership of the Party, reflected the age-groups inside the Party, 95 of the delegates i.e. 68% were below 35 years, bearing out the fact that the party has attracted the rising youth

from all classes and that its own leadership is the youngest of all political parties.

All the generations of the Party were represented at the Congress. 8 were early pioneers who had joined the Party before 1929, 21 had joined between 1929-33, 30 between 1934-37, 42 during 1938-39, and 8 as late as 1942. Here was the striking evidence that our Party is such that while it retains continuity with its past it is able to rapidly promote its new and rising cadres according to plan.

The entire patriotic past of our people stood mirrored in the delegation.

There was Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna, Founder-President of the Ghadr Party.

About half the Bengal delegates had done one term in jail as terrorists and another as Communists.

Comrades Teja Singh and Sohan Singh Josh had been leaders in the Akali movement.

There was Namboodripad who had been Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (P.C.C.) ;

Bankim Mukerjee who had been several times Vice-President of the Bengal P.C.C. ;

Z. A. Ahmed of the U. P. P. C. C.,

Sohan Singh Josh of the Punjab P. C. C. ;

Bahal Singh of the Delhi P. C. C.

There were S.A. Dange and Bankim Mukherjee, the unanimously elected Presidents of the All-India Trade Union Congress and the All-India Kisan Sabha respectively.

Looking up the past political records of the delegates the conclusion stood sharp and clear : All the streams of Indian patriotism converge towards our party.

Our party has fought many a battle, and never lost one. It has only emerged stronger after each. To-day it is the battle of India that has to be fought by Indian patriots. Who can resist our selfless efforts to unite the Congress and the League when the very life of the nation demands it ? Who can stop us from mobilising the workers for production and the peasants to grow more food when the daily needs of our own people demand it and the best sons and daughters of the workers and peasants are in our own ranks?

The entire delegation to our Party Congress embodied this spirit, of crusaders for the defence of the motherland, tireless mobilisers of the toiling masses from whose ranks they themselves had risen.



## **WARNS OF DEEPENING NATIONAL CRISIS**

### **People's Patriotism & Victorious Red Army Prevent Disaster So Far**

(The following is an extract from the Political Report which Comrade P. C. Joshi delivered before the First Congress of the Communist Party of India. Comrade Joshi spoke for about nine hours. The extract gives an analysis of the National Crisis, the elements which created it, its features, how it is deepening and how the elements of its solution are appearing.)

\* \* \* \* \*

We characterised the period that opened on the 9th of August as National Crisis. The Nation was faced with a crisis. It was faced with a double peril. Our Resolution describes it thus :

#### **The Double Peril**

“The menace of Japanese invasion remains and grows. On top of this comes the internal peril. Ignoring the grim warning sounded by the collapse of imperial colonial regimes in Malaya, Singapore and Burma, in the face of Japanese invasion, the British imperialist bureaucracy continued to think and act in terms of defending India as their colony and refused to free India to ensure active and voluntary co-operation of the people.....Taking advantage of the Congress threat of struggle and non-cooperation they passed on to repression and the arrest of National leaders.....The ghastly repression launched by the bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the sabotage movement organised by the Fifth Column, with the help of the angered patriotic masses, on the other, created a situation of gravest peril to India as well as to the cause of the United Nations. The political crisis has deepened during the last 10 months and has got intertwined with the economic crisis on the production and the food fronts. This means that while the menace of invasion grows the rear is cracking up. Such is the double peril which faces our country”.

#### **Fifth Column Let In**

*What did all this boil down to ?* The Government was throwing patriots into the arms of the Fifth Column and destroying the

people's morale. The patriots were destroying the defence of the country instead of organising it. The Fifth Column had entered the National movement. Forces were let loose out of which only the Jap invader could gain.

*What was the situation inside the camp of the patriotic forces?* Our Party which stood for National Defence was isolated. The rest who stood for destroying National Defence were united. They called it National Unity. It was really the beginning to National disruption. This became clear as the struggle advanced. The more the struggle sharpened the more did unity between the Fifth Column and the honest patriots begin to be disrupted.

### **In The Patriotic Camp**

How did it happen ? In the early phase of the spontaneous outburst which followed the arrest of the leaders, the Fifth Column consolidated itself for sabotage. Its links with the honest patriots strengthened. But as soon as the spontaneous upsurge subsided, the implications of the policy of sabotage became clearer to the honest patriot. The split between the honest Congressman and the Fifth Column began to take place.

The Gandhiite began to turn away when he saw the struggle degenerating into anarchy against the people. He shrunk back from it saying that this is not non-violence. He got immobilised. The Nehruite was aghast when he saw pro-Jap feeling spreading, when he saw his Fifth-Columnist allies doing open and unashamed pro-Jap propaganda.

The Forward Blocists hailed the Japs as the liberators. The Congress Socialists put it more cunningly: The Jap army of invasion would be a negative help ! At this the Nehruite began to turn away from the Fifth Column. He said the struggle had failed because its organisation was in unworthy hands.

### **Communists Intervene**

We intervened with the National Unity Campaign. Our slogans were : Release the leaders ! Stop sabotage ! Accept self-determination and forge National unity. It helped us to galvanise our own political

base. *We were yet unable to make the entire mass of patriots turn. But it helped us to break through our isolation from the patriotic camp.*

Our *'Release the Leaders'* campaign conducted in the face of repression, established our patriotic bonafides with the Congressmen and knocked the bottom out of the Fifth Columnist slanders against us

Our *anti-sabotage* propaganda and activity helped the Nehruites politically and earned for us the respect of the honest Gandhiites. They both saw that we have the courage to go all out to save the people from Fifth Column attacks while they only sat at home and bemoaned anarchy.

Our *self-determination* propaganda and the response it gets from the Muslim masses made the Congressmen move from "Unity is impossible" to "Unity may be possible". The net result of our intervention and campaigning was that we set the Congress patriot thinking.

### **The Food Crisis**

On top of the political crisis came the food crisis shaking the economy of our country to its very foundations. The country is threatened with food riots on a mass scale while the enemy is pounding our homes with bombs. The front of National Defence against the aggressor is weak while the economic rear is cracking up. How does this come about ?

It is due to the working out of the same imperialist policy on the economic front. That policy creates the profiteer. When the war approaches the borders of India, the load on the National economy rises. The prices soar steeply. The profiteer becomes a hoarder. Government's price control measures become abortive being carried out without stocks, without the co-operation of the people. Instead of checking profiteering and hoarding they create the black market.

The situation becomes worse after August 9. The Nationalist trader and industrialist thinks it patriotism to raise prices and hide stocks. He thinks he is hitting the Government. In reality he is hitting the people, creating starvation and food riots. He is disrupting the rear and opening the door to the *Fifth Column* to play havoc on the food front.

*This means the extension of the National crisis from the patriots to the entire people.*

### **Fighting The Fifth Column**

Wherever we were, we went straight out against food riots.

We prevented a breakdown on the industrial front. We prevented strikes on the Railways ( B. B. & C. I. and G. I. P.) and in the Bombay Textile industry by mobilising the workers to force the owners and the Government to open cheap grain shops.

We campaigned for food and showed the people the way to get food. Our successful food campaign played a great role in overcoming the demoralisation of the patriot who after the collapse of the struggle was sunk in the mood—"nothing can be done." We united the patriotic parties in the People's Food Committees. The Leaguers came in because of our propaganda for self-determination. The Congressmen came in because of our campaign for Gandhiji's release. Their work in the People's Food Committees showed them that ours was the path of patriotism and of the service of the people. Slanders against Communists ceased.

The Fifth Column whispered to the people: "Food riots to get food". To the patriots they said: "Begin the second round of the 'freedom revolution' by starting food riots." We fought back the Fifth Column.

We warned the people: "You will get bullets not food". To the patriot we said: "the Fifth Column wants civil war in the interests of its Jap master. A food riot on the economic front is just what sabotage was on the political front. It disrupts us and does not hit the bureaucrat."

To all we showed in practice that if people unite they can solve the food problem and that food can be had.

We intervened on the food front on an all-India scale, with the same slogans, the same technique and with our fully disciplined team. We prevented riots breaking out on a national scale. We prevented another and a more elemental August 9 on the food front. This was, of course, its negative aspect. The positive aspect was that we built people's unity over the food issue. We showed the mass of patriots everywhere that our policy of unity was not an abstraction but a practical way out.

### **Jap Bombs Over Bengal**

When the prelude to Japanese invasion of India came in the form of bombs over the eastern districts of Bengal and Assam, our Bengal comrades went all out to hold the people. They fought panic by rousing patriotism. They kept Calcutta going by rousing the

patriotism of the tramway workers. They saved the country, and showed to the patriots that despite all difficulties the people can be roused and moved by our policy of national defence. The great work of our comrades in Bengal was a resounding rebuff to the Jap militarists. It showed them that these Bolshevik sons and daughters of Bengal and not the traitor Bose are beloved of the people.

*Sons of the British and American people held the skies. Our comrades rallied the people against panic.*

*All glory to Calcutta Tramwaymen who kept the city's transport running!*

*All glory to the working class of Bengal who kept production going!*

*All honour to the Party in Bengal!*

*This great work coupled with the Jap bombs destroyed the myth that the Japs merely bomb military objectives. The Fifth Column was carrying on a whisper campaign to the effect that the Japs were coming as liberators. This was blown up by our slogan—"The Japs are enslavers and those who say they are liberators, are agents of Japan."*

The Jap bombs stirred the Nehruite Congressmen all over India. They saw now more clearly than ever that sabotage anywhere in India was a stab in the back of their own brothers and sisters in Calcutta and in Chittagong. They could no longer hug the illusion that their struggle was one of "fighting the British to fight the Japs."

### **Gandhiji's Fast**

The next turning point in the crisis was Gandhiji's fast. His correspondence with the Viceroy had a great political significance. The positive content of that correspondence was repudiation of sabotage and anarchy, willingness for settlement and anxiety over the food crisis. It told Congressmen that sabotage was not Congress policy. Gandhiji's correspondence became a powerful lever in our hands to wean away honest Congressmen from the Fifth Column.

It showed that the National leadership disowned the practical outcome of the August 8 resolution, but was not yet prepared to go beyond its framework. Gandhiji stated his willingness for

settlement, but it was clear enough that the British Government did not want settlement. Gandhiji's saying, "Let Mr Jinnah form a National Government," led nowhere; for he gave no positive call for unity between the Congress and the League, which would lead to a settlement and result in the establishment of a National Government.

In short, Gandhiji asked Congressmen to give up sabotage but he did not tell them what to do next. The initiative was still left with the imperialists. The tragic lesson of the last 8 months was completely missed.

The language of the Viceregal correspondence showed how strong the bureaucracy felt after the struggle. No Viceroy had ever dared to write to Gandhiji in the way this one had done. The obduracy of the bureaucracy in refusing to release Gandhiji, in refusing to allow anyone to see him until he repudiated the stand of the August 8 resolution, has only intensified the frustration of the people.

Our rousing propaganda for the release of Gandhiji during and after the fast concentrated the attention of all serious patriots on the slogan which we put forward :

To win Gandhiji's release is to turn the scales against the bureaucracy and take a big leap out of the crisis.

The Fifth Column came out with the slogan : "intensify the struggle to get Gandhiji's release". In fact they did not want Gandhiji's release. They considered it a blow to the struggle. They even said: "It is best if Gandhiji dies ; that will lead to another revolutionary wave."

Our "Release Gandhiji" campaign and the Fifth Column opposition which it encountered helped us to drive deeper the wedge between Congressmen and the Fifth Column.

### **Key To The Crisis**

The Key to the understanding of the entire period from August 9 onwards is this—the mass of patriots have been blinded by their hatred of British rule. What they did was decided for them by the provocative action of the British bureaucrats. The Fifth Column comes on the scene and acts as the incendiary. The country is set aflame. The battle now begins between the Communists and the Fifth Column for the ear of the patriots.

Will the Fifth Column be able to capitalise the anti-British hatred of the people to turn them into saboteurs of National Defence and thus aid the Jap invaders ? Or will the Communists be able to rouse their patriotic ardour to realise that defence of the motherland is their own duty and that to act as unifiers of the people was their immediate job!

It was a decisive battle. On its outcome depended whether the Japs would march in or not. We fought as we had never fought before. The Fifth Column lost decisively. We won the first round but we have not won the battle.

Comrade Joshi then went on to enumerate the positive achievements of the Party in this battle. He showed how Communists came between the police and the people and helped people to resist provocation, how they kept production going, how they held the countryside in the threatened districts of Bengal, Kerala and Andhra, how they rescued the students from the clutches of the Fifth Column, and how they roused a patriotic upsurge among women in the threatened provinces. He concluded the general analysis of the crisis in the following words :

### **Conclusion**

All this work by the Party was the positive factor that did not let the national crisis become a national disaster.

The basis for these achievements was the healthy patriotism of our people which could be so easily roused. It was the basic honesty of Congress patriots that helped them to break with the Fifth Column.

But the mightiest factor was the sledge hammer of the Red Army at the Hitlerite hordes and the epic defence and victory at Stalingrad, which saved not only the city of Stalin but our own motherland and gave us time to rouse our people, to strive to unite them for national defence. But the national crisis remains and has become worse.

## **GREETINGS FROM BROTHER PARTIES**

### **Great Britain**

*Unite all patriots for defence.*

*We campaign to end the deadlock.*

The Communist Party of Great Britain sent the following message :

“Best wishes for the success of the historic First Convention of the Communist Party of India. This critical hour for India demands renewed efforts by both Indian and British people to end the impasse, to secure release of political prisoners and open negotiations for a National Government as an ally of the United Nations.

We pledge our efforts for an intensive campaign to rally Labour and democratic opinion here in order to change the policy of the Government. We are confident that the leadership of your Convention will rally all Indian patriots for a positive policy of national unity and defence of India, leading to the freedom of India.”

Harry Pollitt (General Secretary)

R. Palme Dutt (Member of the Central Committee)

William Rust (Editor of Daily Worker, London)

William Gallachar (Communist Member of Parliament)

## Canada

*Your Congress proves strength of democratic forces.*

Tim Buck, General Secretary of the Illegal Communist Party of Canada sent the following cable :

“HEARTY greetings to the First National Convention of the Communist Party of India from the Communist Movement in Canada.

We Canadian Communists while fighting the ban on the Communist Party in Canada, hail your convention as a signal manifestation of the growth of the democratic forces and hope for victory over the fascist Axis for the Freedom of the world”.

## South Africa

*Our bond of brotherhood is unbreakable.*

From Comrade Kotane, General Secretary, Communist Party of South Africa :

“REGRET that it is impossible to send a fraternal delegate to your important First National Convention to be held on May 23. We are stirred by your great efforts to unite the Indian people and win National Government. The masses of South African people repudiate the Penetration Act (The Anti-Indian Bill) and affirm the solidarity of our two countries for victory and freedom.”



U. S. A.

*Your policy shall win a free India in a free world*

The National Committee of the Communist Party of the United States of America sent the following message of greetings to the First Congress of the Communist Party Of India.

"We greet the First National Convention of the Communist Party of India as a landmark in the history of your country and Asia. We know it will be a contribution of great value of achievement of the National Independence of India and the victory of all the peoples of the United Nations in this people's war of National Liberation for ridding the world of fascism.

The Communist Party of India has become an influential political factor, one that is indispensable to the upholders and defenders of your country's national interests, as an organic part of its patriotic forces advancing towards national liberation and defending at all costs India from barbaric Nazi-Japanese domination. Despite all difficulties the Communist Party succeeded in convincing considerable masses that the Indian struggle for national liberty and Independence cannot be separated from the struggle of all freedom loving peoples headed by the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition against Hitler which is fighting for destruction of Nazism and fascism.

By opposing all sabotage of your country's defence against Japanese and Nazi invasion the Communist Party and other enlightened patriots of India contributed to the defeat of the grandiose plan of the Axis, of encircling the Caucasus, the Near East and India, which was smashed by the Red Army at Stalingrad. The splendid victory of the gallant American and British Armies in North Africa together with the outcome of the epic winter offensive of the Soviet make a new and decisive stage of the war imminent, requiring the immediate establishment of a Second Front in Europe, and necessitating complete co-ordination of the military efforts of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and Britain for concerted blows against the heart of Nazi Germany in Europe.

Simultaneously, it is necessary for America, Britain and India to strengthen the fighting alliance with China for the destruction of Japan's reactionary New Order based on murder and enslavement of the Chinese, Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian and other peoples.

We believe that the course recommended by your Party if supported by the Indian people unitedly cannot but advance the

achievement of India's independence.

We are confident that the Indian people can be united through a policy of reliance upon popular mass organisations of peasants and workers and by the co-operation of all national patriotic forces in the defence of India working in solidarity with the Anti-Hitler coalition, with heroic China, and with the anti-fascists and peoples everywhere.

Inspired by the great potentialities of your Party Convention and confident that the American working class and people can make their own special contribution of aid to the solution of India's problems, as a part of our solemn duty to win this worldwide people's war of national liberation, we pledge our solidarity with India's people and their Party.

We wish you success and send you ardent fraternal greetings."

William Z. Foster

Eari Browder

*National Chairman and General Secretary respectively of  
the Communist Party of the United States of America*

## Chile

*New impetus to forces of freedom.*

From Comrade Contreras Labarca, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile. South-America :

"The Communist Party of Chile sends warm fraternal greetings to the First National Convention of Communist Party of India which undoubtedly will give new impetus to the heroic struggle of the Indian people for Independence of their Fatherland on the basis of defending India against Axis aggression and co-operating fully with the United Nations for destruction of fascist barbarism."

## Cuba

*For universal unity against fascism*

From Comrades Juan Marinello and Blas Roca, President and Secretary respectively of the General Executive of the Communist Party of Cuba :

"On the occasion of the celebration of the First National Convention of the glorious Communist Party of India we send our fraternal greetings and cordial wishes for the historic and successful outcome of your Congress for universal unity and progress of the

Indian people in resisting the barbarous fascists and for the unbreakable unity of the Indian people and the peoples of the world.”

## MESSAGES FROM AILING PARTY LEADERS

*Your decision will open up new epoch of advance.*

[Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, an ex-member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India has been kept away from Party work by tuberculosis. From Madanapalle sanatorium he sent an inspiring message from which we give extracts ]

May 11th, 1943.

Ten years have passed since the Provisional Central Committee was formed and the idea of the Convention was first broached—ten years during which the Party has grown from a tiny group into what it is to-day. Repression has failed to crush it, slander has failed to curb its growth, and to-day when the oft-postponed Convention really meets, it stands, having weathered many a storm that threatened to wipe it out, stronger than ever, a force to be reckoned with, loved by millions of our countrymen, feared by our enemies. Led by our Party, our class has become, for the first time in its history, an independent political force on a national scale, has stood firm like a rock in the midst of chaos and confusion and is uniting increasingly larger sections of the people under the patriotic banner of national unity and national defence.

But we shall not rest on our cars.

We have to rouse our nation from the slough of despair into which it has fallen, we have to achieve that unity which is yet unrealised, we have to ensure that, in the new period of all-round advance, that was inaugurated by the winter victories of the Red Army and carried forward by American, British, and Indian armies in Tunisia, India too plays her rightful role and thus wins her freedom and a worthy place among the great nations of the world. This Convention will have to show the way.

I greet all of you comrades who have gathered at this historic Convention of our Party. I am sure your decision will inaugurate a new period of advance in our history.

I hope to be soon in your midst to do my share.

*Congress will transform Party into mighty fist of our people.*

[R. D. Bharadwaj who is at present in the Bhowali sanatorium fighting T.B., is an ex-member of Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. He sent the following message to the First Congress of the Party.]

Bhowali Sanatorium,  
11th May, 1943.

I hail the National Convention with Bolshevik greetings. Ours is the only Party which has shown the path of national unity and of rallying the Indian people for participation in the war of liberation.

To-day the nation is faced with the severest food crisis.

The political deadlock still continues. The national leaders are behind the prison bars. Japanese invaders are daily bombing the cities and towns of Bengal.

At this critical time, the National Convention must take decisions to transform the Party into a mighty fist of the Indian people. The Convention must serve as a clarion call for all in unity so that we may be able to launch a peoples' offensive in India simultaneously with the final offensive which the Red Army is preparing in Europe.

Long live the Communist Party of India, the worthy child of the Indian people!

Salud.

#### **FROM COURAGEOUS MOTHERS OF CHITTAGONG HEROES**

*'I know Communist boys and girls love their country best.'*

[This is a message from an old mother of 60 years who has gladly given away all her sons to the Service of the Motherland. Her second son Ardhendu was killed when he and others raided the Chittagong Armoury. Her third son Com. Sukhendu Dastidar, Chittagong Armoury Raid Prisoner, still languishes in Dacca Central Jail. Her eldest son Purnendu has been working in the Communist Party and is now a District Committee member. Her younger children are all active either in the Party or in the mass organisations allied to the Party.]

"At the time of the raid on the Chittagong armoury I lost my son Ardhendu. He died for his country. Sukhendu has been in prison

for the last 13 years. He along with the rest of his co-prisoners from this district declared from behind the bars that they wanted to fight the Japs. Still the Government did not let them out to defend their Motherland. I have no regrets for that. Almost all my sons work in the Communist Party. I have heard that Sukhendu too has become a Communist, even in jail. I know that the Communist boys and girls love their country the best. Old as I am, I have been moved by their work to join the Mahila Samiti (Women's Organisation).

On the occasion of the first Congress of the Communist Party I wanted to say this only ; I am proud that I have been able to offer my sons along with other patriots in the cause of my country's freedom. It is my firm conviction that the Communist Party will very soon bring out our imprisoned sons and daughters, solve the food crisis and make our country free."

*'I will dedicate him again.'*

[Message from the old mother of Com. Ananda Gupta, Chittagong Armoury Raid Prisoner, now in Alipore Central Jail. Her eldest son Devaprasad was killed while raiding the armoury. Ananda developed asthma while in Jail and almost on the point of death was released by the Bengal Government on the condition that he should keep out of Bengal. In his serious condition he was taken to Puri, but the Orissa Government would not let him stay and the Bengal Government would not intervene. He had to come back to Bengal but the Government disregarding his serious condition has put him back in jail.]

"My eldest son Devaprasad died while raiding the Chittagong Armoury. Then Ananda was convicted to transportation for life. Since he went to jail he has been suffering all along. The Communist Party has worked up a great agitation for his release. Recently, when his condition was very serious he was released for a few days only and again taken back to jail. I know they won't be able to keep him in jail for long.

On the occasion of the First Congress of the Communist Party I want to say this: It is the Communist Party alone which will be able to bring Ananda and others out of the jail. May the Party be able to fulfil speedily its test of freeing the country; old as I am, I will then be able to dedicate my son again to the cause of the country and die in peace."

## **FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE MOTHERLAND**

### **Report On The First Congress**

**P. C. Joshi**

#### **Our First Congress**

After 15 years of existence, it was our first Party Congress.

Delegations came from all provinces, representing all the generations in our Party and every section of our great people. An overwhelming majority were young, but only in age and not in experience in the service of the people. They had planted the Red Flag in their own localities, held it high against every conceivable offensive and won recognition for it as a patriotic flag and for themselves as a patriotic team who could not be vanquished in the field of patriotic service of the people. They had come to Bombay, the home of the Red Flag, for the first Congress of the Party. They had come with the devotion of pilgrims, with the will of fighting warriors, and the consciousness of seekers after truth.

I know of no political gathering in which so much political seriousness prevails. Every hour was used from 6 A.M. to 11 P.M. for ten days ( May 23rd to June 1st )—there were 6 hours of reports and discussions in the Congress Hall and another 2 or 3 hours in their own delegations and not once was there an exhibition of frayed nerves or of tired yawns.

The dominant mood was : Let us get it straight and we will put it through! Here were patriots whose one aim was to get the policy right in their own heads, who took not only their own determination to put it into practice for granted, but the response of the people as well.

Their faith in the people was undying because they were themselves the children of the people, living and working right in their midst, and their own political career bore out that the people had never let the Party down : the better they themselves had agitated for Party policy the more enthusiastic the response they had won, the harder they had worked for Party slogans the greater the actual support they secured.

It had been so in the past and they felt ever more confident that it would be so in the future. Were they not the officers of the patriotic army that is our Party, who had successfully negotiated the most difficult turn in the career of the Party and from a

slandered group on August 9 had become the third Party in the land today. Theirs was a self-confidence born out of their own achievements.

### **All For Political Clarity**

Non-Party patriots know us as fanatical agitators and tireless organisers but the source of our fanatical faith in our policy and of our tireless energy is yet a mystery to them. It comes to us through political clarity.

We take endless pains to correctly analyse objective reality and still more how to mould this reality in the interests of our people and this leads us straight to our slogans of action. A lot of hard thinking is done before the resounding slogans emerge which take the people by storm. The party Congress was a living demonstration of how we achieve political unanimity in our ranks which is the wonder of every patriot and which gives us all the strength we possess.

Soon after the delegates arrived they were given the main points of the Political Resolution and then the Political Resolution itself. They were to discuss these among themselves for 2 days before the resolution came up in the Congress, their own provincial leaders acting as reporters in their own languages. While they were on this job the Central leadership was busy with another draft, the first draft made still sharper and clearer and when this one went to the delegates the unanimous comment was : It removes most of the confusion and clarifies all that we came here for.

I sent back all the provincial leaders with : it is not so easy, go back and discuss it still more thoroughly and get ready to hear the reports and ask the comrades to keep a real sharp check up on their own understanding as each day goes by.

Before the Congress formally met the delegates had been thus set on the rails of collective thinking and the stage set for collective understanding and collective decisions on the floor of the Congress.

### **Inside The R. M. Bhatt Hall**

The Party Congress was held inside the Hall of the R.M. Bhatt

School right above the Kamgar Maidan, hallowed in the annals of the working class and in the memory of every Communist.

On the pillars in front of the dais were the portraits of Jinnah and Nehru with League and Congress flags serving as the background. A pressman told me that we had made better portraits of the national leaders than are seen even in a Congress session. Why not, I said, we portray them at their best and ourselves carry their heritage forward ? I doubt if he understood me !

Our Qaid-e-Azam had the same keen intelligent face all know but with no air of the suspicious leader : our artist made him look a self possessed patriot.

Our Mahatma flowed with the milk of human kindness, without a trace of the confused mystic who would put the British rulers, Jap fascists, and Soviet leaders all on the same par because they are all adherents of violence!

Our Nehru was the honest sensitive soul all know but not the helpless intellectual who thundered against fascism but did not know what to do about it in practice.

In the background over the heads of the Presidium were our teachers and leaders, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

The grand portraits were the work of the self-taught artist, Comrade Chitta Prasad from Bengal. His talent flowers inside our Party!

Inside the Hall all round were the portraits of the leaders of our brother parties. One felt stronger in their presence.

It is our Party alone that has not only friends but brothers abroad ; other Parties just like ours, working for the same cause, amidst their own people, all going stronger and stronger.

All together for victory was no more a dream but a living reality being made more and more real by our own efforts!

### **Greetings**

The Congress began with my reading the greetings received from the brother Parties, all over the world. Fraternal delegates too had come.

Little Lanka is not far off and Comrade Wickramasinghe and the two younger comrades by calling our party the elder brother became more like our Party delegates than fraternal ones.

*Ghoshal represented the Burmese comrades, and wanted to*



exploit the advantage of being both Indian and Burmese, learn as much as he could in our ranks here and rush back to Burma to organize the struggle against the Japs.

Amery might not let Gallacher come to India but the war has brought enough British comrades to India for one of them to attend and speak at the Congress to symbolise the joint efforts of our parties to unite our two peoples in a free and brotherly union.

Satyen Mazumdar, the doyen among Bengali journalists, had sacrificed a career rather than go with Bose. He had come all the way to unburden himself and declare :

"I see in your Party the pillar of hope and inspiration for our dear country." The best in Bengal is already lining up with the Party. Listening to Satyen Babu was to get the confidence that we will be able to move the best throughout India.

Numerous other greetings and over 200 garlands had been received.

### **Homage to Martyrs**

The first resolution was one of homage to Party martyrs and was moved by the veteran Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna who had barely escaped the gallows and had seen his early comrades hanged but all the living ones inside the Party. In sincere and simple language he moved all the delegates:

"Ours is the Party of martyrs, no other Party works among the people better. No other Party fights the fascists better. Communists are the best patriots in every country today. Ours is a Party not only of martyrs but of living martyrs : We give our all to the Party—body, soul and property. Look at me, after 40 years struggle I have reached the gate of the Party. You comrades are lucky because you begin your life in the Party. I have only one desire, to hold on to the Red Banner and work in step with you comrades. When I die let me have a red funeral."

Then followed Kelu Nair, Cell Secretary of Kayyur, brother of one of the martyred four, but he was too choked with emotion to be able to speak.

The Kerala comrades sang in chorus the song in memory of the Kayyur martyrs and we passed the resolution all standing.

### **Behind The Bars**

Biswanath moved the resolution of "Comrades Behind the Bars".

It was news for the press that 695 Party members were in jail, as it was news for the delegates that another 105 were serving life-terms. The Congress called upon the comrades to carry on from their own localities and provinces a specialised agitation for their release.

### **To The Red Army**

Krishnan made the most brilliant speech of the session when he moved the resolution of greetings to the Red Army and the Armies of the United Nations :

“It is the Red Army that has saved us from the fate of Hitlerite slavery, despite the worst the British rulers have done to throw our people into the arms of the Fifth Column, despite the worst our own misguided patriots have done to destroy the defence of our own country’....

The Red Army has given us time to learn our lessons, and carve our destiny....The true homage to the Red Army is to rally our people behind the armies defending our eastern frontier so that the sacrifices of the Red Army may not go in vain, to unite our people as the peoples of the Soviet Union are united, with a National Government and created a National Army which may defend us as heroically and successfully as the Red Army defends the Soviet soil.”

### **To The Indian Army**

Lahiri moved the resolution on the Indian Army. So far we had been popularising the policy of national defence.

The resolution called upon the Party to go a step further, popularise the army as the defender of India and give it all the support it needs.

Lahiri lashed out against those who argued long and loud about the motives of British imperialists and do not see the living reality that it is the British and Indian soldiers who are giving us time to do all we can to forge national unity and win a National Government of National Defence.

What role the Indian army will play in the future India will depend upon what present role the Indian patriots play in the defence of the country.

To visit the sins of the British rulers on the British soldiers defending the Indian frontier is to cut our own throats.

To sneer at the lack of patriotism in the Indian soldier is to laugh at our own failure to establish a National Government.

### **Medical Mission To China**

The greetings to our Chinese comrades in arms expressed not only our gratitude for keeping the Japs off our soil and for the solicitude of the Chinese people and Government of settlement in India, but also the promise to send a Medical Unit as a token of our solidarity. Our Party is eager to carry on the good work and tradition established by the Congress Medical Unit. Names of six Volunteer Doctors have already been received.

### **On the International**

Ranadive moved the resolution endorsing the dissolution of the International. Communists never stick to form when it hinders immediate tasks.

The dissolution of the International will remove the last card of the reactionaries, lead to greater unity among the United Nations and to greater patriotic unity inside each freedom-loving nation. The International has fulfilled its historic role, given each country a mature Communist Party to do all it can to build national and international unity in the ranks of its own people....

The International has made us what we are and the gift of the international to the Indian people is our Party....

They say the International is dead. We say it is immortal. It shall live embodied in every Communist Party in every country of the world.

He was cheered as he closed.

### **Political Report**

The main item of the Congress was the omnibus Political Resolution on which I made a 9-hour report to the delegates. The resolution analysed the present international and national situation, characterised the policies of the imperialist government and of the national leadership, endorsed the Party policy, checked up on the mistakes made in the understanding and carrying out of our policy, redefined Party policy in still clearer terms and set concrete tasks before the Party.

### **Imperial Government**

The international situation and its bearing on India had already

been covered through earlier speeches. I began with the national situation itself and the basic explanation of the events of last year.

The primary issue was the successful defence of India. The fate of the Indian people depended upon what policy the two dominant parties, the imperialist government and the national leadership pursued.

The imperialist reactionaries refused to learn the lesson of Malaya and Burma. They wanted to defend India but only as their colony.

This led them straight to suppression of the Indian people. If our people as a whole did not walk into the arms of the Fifth Column it is despite the worst they have done.

The bureaucrats have only succeeded in destroying the morale of the people, isolating the armies at the front from the rear and earned for themselves the ever-growing hatred of the people. The result is that India is the weakest sector in the world front of the United Nations.

### **National Leadership**

The Congress leadership, on the other hand, was so much blinded with hatred of British rule that in order to win National Government it gambled with National Defence itself. The result was that it opened the flank of the national movement to an attack from the imperialist rulers and the front of the country to the fascist invaders.

The national leadership led the country not to the establishment of national government but to the suppression of the national movement and its disruption.

Despite their declared aims the imperialist bureaucracy acted the provocateur against Indian defence and the national leadership as the disruptor of national defence. I explained at length how these were the two forces that produced the national crisis.

### **Situation To-Day**

The present face of the crisis was summed up as

*While the fighting front remains in danger, the rear inside the country is cracking up.*

Stalingrad and the Tunisian victories saved India from the West, but the Jap peril from the East remains and has increased.

To speculate whether the Japs are coming or not is to be a victim of imperialist illusions.

The Jap militarists cannot sit on the fence: they must either advance towards the domination of Asia or lose everything. They know enough about the inner-rottenness of the British colonial regime and the incompetence of the British ruling class.

India must seem to them the easiest prize, because it is politically the weakest.

The more Hitler is beaten in Europe, the more desperate Tojo must become.

The danger to India remains because the Japs are at our very door. The strength of the fighting front has not increased because the relation between the front and the rear is not stronger but weaker, as a result of the policy of the Government.

While the front was not only threatened but weak, the greatest danger came from the rear which was already cracking up. What is the actual position ?

### **Political Picture**

Repression had failed to kill patriotism; it had only made the people feel helpless. In this condition anti-British feeling easily got a pro-Jap twist, "let the Japs come and chuck the British out, after that, we shall see." Such feeling does not lead to peace in the rear but plays havoc with people's morale.

'Struggle' has not only collapsed but left a sad tale behind. The policy of "let us fight the British to fight the Japs" has come to roost and is manifest as, "we fought and lost ; now nothing can be done." The same Congress patriot who had drugged himself into the "do or die" mood and held the theory of "short and swift struggle" now piteously says, "nothing can be done." The misguided patriot has become a demoralised figure. He does not yet see that it was the policy of sabotage that has collapsed. Nor does he see that to say that "nothing can be done" is to slander India's 400 millions. Above all, for him to say that "nothing can be done" is to slander the great Congress itself, its capacity to rally and lead the Indian people.

This mood contains the seeds of something worse too. The Congress patriots are leaderless, the Fifth Column could humbug them into sabotage; it could catch their ear again if it can show

that "something can be done" by means of Jap invasion or with a worsening economic situation.

The people feel helpless, the mass of patriots demoralised, and the Fifth Column is bidding its second chance. The situation in the rear could not be worse for the country's defence nor better for the fascist invaders.

### **Economic Picture**

The economic situation is the exact counterpart of the political.

The Government pursuing the selfish policy of putting imperial interests above Indian interests is unable to organise Indian economy. It has been relying on the profit-motive to keep production going. It is the profiteer who is turning round and creating economic deadlock and demanding more and more profit.

On the production front the industrialists are not interested in production but only in their own profit rate. Prices are rising. The gap between wages and prices is yawning wider and wider. Instead of giving adequate *mahagai* (dearness allowance) to the workers, the owners are asking the Government to keep the workers down in order to keep production going. The people are being fleeced through higher prices; the workers are being provoked to strike. The situation is drifting towards a spontaneous strike wave, a 9th of August on the industrial front. The Government has already begun arresting Trade Union Workers of the Party.

On the food front the bureaucrats have given up all control, because they made paper-schemes and relied upon the hoarder himself to get the stocks! The food market has become a black-market, the stocks are going underground with greater impunity than did the saboteur.

The same Government that could not unmask the Fifth Column as the traitor cannot unmask the hoarder as the food-thief because people's co-operation comes nowhere in its food plans just as it did not figure in its defence plans. In the meanwhile people are left without food and the stage is set for food riots throughout the country.

In the countryside in vast areas food scarcity is more acute than even in the towns. Poor peasants have eaten up even their seed grains, mass epidemics are breaking out, and a mass exodus is taking place to the towns in search of jobs and bread. In the villages,

grain stocks are only held by a few rich peasants. Because of continuously rising prices of industrial goods and the uncertainty of prices of agricultural goods, food is passing after each harvest from the hands of the peasant producer, to the hoarders. Starvation stalks the countryside, famine and epidemics loom ahead.

The Government has no grip over the economic situation, which is drifting towards civil war : food riots inside the towns and also in the villages, with the town hungry marching to the countryside hunting for food, and the hungry from the village running to towns for jobs and bread.

The political policy of the imperialist bureaucrats provokes the patriots to destroy defence, their economic policy provoked one section of the people to look another to satisfy their own elemental hunger.

The cumulative effect of the two leads inevitably to crack-up of the rear.

That is why the resolution characterised the national crisis as having “worsened and deepened.”

### **The Silver Lining**

The policies of the imperialist ruler and the national leadership between each other had produced the national crisis. The policy and activity of the Party constituted the silver lining in the black horizon.

Ours was the only patriotic Party that had stood foursquare for the policy on defence of the motherland as its foremost patriotic task. Ours, therefore, was the only party that could intervene in the crisis. We did not succumb to but fought imperialist provocation. We stuck to the people and kept them off sabotage and where we are too weak we suffered with them but not without keeping in front of them our warning that they were not fighting for *swaraj* but playing into the hands of the police.

We did not give up our policy when we found the mass of patriots disagreeing with us. After the leaders were removed and the Fifth Column entered the national arena, we went on explaining to Congress patriots that they were playing into the hands of the Fifth Column and not realising the Congress ideal.

Congressmen read in Gandhiji's correspondence what we said on the very day of his arrest. More, we went on explaining to every

Congress patriot we could reach that sabotage of the country's defence could never lead to Indian freedom but to Jap slavery if it were successful. At the same time its failure, and it was bound to fail, would lead to intensification of the imperialist stranglehold over our own people and still further weaken the defence of our own country.

After the collapse of the "struggle" every thinking Congressman sees that every word of our warning has come true.

We played not only a negative or merely explanatory role against sabotage. Our party campaigned for its own programme of national unity as the means of successful national defence and the weapon for winning National Government. After the illusion of short and swift struggle burst, every honest Congressman who was strong enough not to get demoralised inevitably began to listen to us.

We gave a running battle to the Fifth Column and did not let it run away with the national movement.

We kept production and transport going and made the Fifth Column break teeth against our class—the working class.

We kept the countryside in the threatened provinces e.g. Bengal, Andhra and Kerala safe from sabotage.

We are too weak to prevent the crisis breaking out but strong enough, together with the strength of the armies of the United Nations, to prevent the crisis including the disaster of Jap invasion.

*Just because our Party discharged its patriotic duty it became strong.*

*Party membership rose from about 5,000 to 16,000, i. e. 351%.*

*Trade Unions had been smashed up; by Lenin Day (21st January, 1943) we brought their membership to about 2 lacs and by May Day it rose to 3 lacs, i. e. 150%.*

*Similarly Kisan Sabhas had become only mass platforms. By Lenin Day we brought their membership to 3 lacs and by May Day, 1943 to about 4 lacs. i. e. rose to 130%.*

*The strength of other mass organisations under the influence of the party by January and May alone rose as follows :*

*Students from 26,000 to 39,000 i.e. 150%*

*Women from 22,000 to 41,000 i.e. 180%.*

*Children from 6,000 to 9,800 i.e. 150%.*

*Volunteers from 25,000 to 32,000 i.e. 130%.*



The estimate of the role of the Party during the crisis was :

*Politically*, the policy of the party is the only way out of the crisis.

*Practically*, the victories already achieved have proved its practicality.

*Organisationally*, the party has grown stronger, become a more effective instrument for carrying the patriotic policy through.

The conclusion reached was :

The selfish policy of the imperialist reactionaries and the negative policy of the national leadership together produced the national crisis.

The Party must solve the national crisis.

The bureaucrats have failed to crush Indian patriotism.

The Fifth Column has failed to bag the national movement and stabilise the sabotage movement.

The national leadership remains in jail.

The more the Party worked out its policy, the more rapidly our nation will be taken out of the crisis. The harder the party members work, the stronger will the Party become as the instrument of solving the crisis, as the builder of national unity.

Our confidence must come from our own achievements and the visible collapse of all alternative policies.

### **Key Political Slogans**

The position inside the patriotic camp was analysed and the picture emerged radically different from that on August 9. Then the Party stood isolated and the Fifth Column had entered the patriotic camp. Now the Party had reforged its links and broken the links of the Fifth Column with the patriots. The Fifth Column had produced disruption in the patriotic camp and the patriots had become its dupes. The Party was working for the unity of the national front and the initiative was passing to the Party.

In such a situation the political slogans of the hour were stated to be:

**ROUSE THE PATRIOTS !** The party was warned against sectarian attitude towards non-Party patriots and not to indulge in endless and futile discussions about the past. The way to rouse the patriot was to lead him on the basis of his own experience, through his

love of the people, to working against the effects of the crisis, e. g., for food.

*The Congress patriot* had tried the suicidal path of sabotage and seen through the rotten Fifth Columnists and learnt a bitter lesson. The Party was in a better position than ever to rally him for the cause of unity as the only battle to be fought—one that could never be lost.

*The League patriot* had sat on the fence too long and seen for himself that it does not lead to self-determination but only to greater suspicion in his own patriotic bonafides. Our Party campaigned for self-determination despite the sectarian attitude of the League. We were therefore best placed to tell the League patriot that he was playing not only with his own rights but with the country's very fate, by sitting tight.

Unless the party could rouse the patriots for unity there was no rallying the people against national crisis, for national defence, and no going towards national government. And the party could do it.

**CRUSH THE FIFTH COLUMN!** The mass of patriots took him to be a misguided patriot and not the nation's enemy No. 1, sapping people's morale, disrupting the national movement and clearing the path for his Jap masters.

The Party was asked to concentrate the main fire against the Fifth Column—not to indulge in a wordy exposure of the Fifth Column in general but make every section of the people see in their own terms how he is the agent of the Jap invaders in the people's ranks and thus the enemy of all.

The Congress patriot must be made to see that the Fifth Column does not want Gandhiji's release because that means the end of the sabotage campaign and opens the prospect of ending the deadlock which does not suit the Jap invaders.

The League patriot must be made to see that the Fifth Column is more rabid than the worst Hindu communalist and more dangerous because it talks in pseudo-socialist jargon.

The town poor must be made to see that the Fifth Column works for food riots and not to get food for the people.

The workers must be roused to see that the Fifth Column is only out to exploit their economic grievances, to blow up production and not to get their just demands.

The peasants must be told that when the Fifth Column whispers 'hold the crop', it is not getting them a fair-price but only provoking the town hungry on the one hand to come marching to the villages to loot and the police-parties on the other to commandeer the harvest.

Every section of the people must be made to see the Fifth Column as their own enemy and as the agent of the Jap fascists who must be wiped out as a political pest.

*BEND THE BUREAUCRAT!* It is the bureaucracy that shunned people's cooperation. It is the task of the patriots to enforce people's cooperation on the Government, because without moving the Government nothing real and concrete could be done to get food, improve and organise production, get the means to grow more food. Patriots cooperating with the Government for the satisfaction of people's needs and for the strengthening of national defence, strengthened the people and not the bureaucrats, prevented the crisis taking a worse and more calamitous turn.

These three slogans were not isolated but interdependent. The more the Party roused the patriots, it isolated the Fifth Column; the more the Party fought the Fifth Column directly and roused the patriots behind the issue, it kept the police off the people. The bureaucrats could not get a single job done. The more the patriots rallied and led the people, the easier they could get the bureaucrats to move. I gave numerous examples how this had been done by party units in different parts of India.

### **Slogans of Action**

The Party had achieved all its victories through the policy of national unity for national defence. The entire Party was called upon to build people's unity in action for every task of national defence and go from the stage of popularising the policy of national unity for national defence to the stage of building national unity in action.

The carrying through of the following campaigns was explained at length :

*NATIONAL DEFENCE CAMPAIGN* was concretised as rallying the people against sabotage, against Fifth Column, for concrete work to strengthen civil defence, and to give whole-hearted support to the armies.

**RELEASE THE LEADERS CAMPAIGN** : A specialised and differentiated approach was to be made.

Among Congressmen the concentration must be against sabotage and for acceptance of the right of self-determination as the only way to get the leaders out.

Among the Leaguers, concentration must be on initiating and joining the campaign for the release of the Congress leaders as the only way to get self-determination. Above all, the campaign must be run not as a general anti-repression campaign but related to the positive task, of ending the deadlock and working for national unity to win national government.

**FOOD CAMPAIGN** : It must unite and rouse all parties against rioting and hoarding and concentrate upon practical constructive work to get stocks, organise distribution and in every possible way get food for the people, by offering the Government people's organised cooperation through the People's Food Committees."

## **PRODUCTION CAMPAIGN**

The entire working class must be roused to regard production as their foremost patriotic task.

Militant workers must be convinced that mass unions and not strike is their weapon to get their just grievances removed and that the more they go all-out for production, the more easily will they get their demands.

Every Party Committee was called upon to take initiative through the T. Us to hold Production Conferences to discuss and formulate practical plans to improve and increase production.

People's support must be won for the production policy of the Party and the workers' demands, and they must see the workers battle for production as their own battle against the profiteer for cheap cloth, etc, etc.

**GROW MORE FOOD CAMPAIGN** · In the countryside kisan patriotism must be roused to grow more food for himself, for the people in the town and for his soldier-sons and their comrades-in-arms who are defending the country, so that production does not collapse and he gets back industrial goods.

## **Self-Criticism**

More than one-third of my time I spent in posing and answering the question :

*How is it that the Party has only been able to increase in influence and not been able to lead the country out of the crisis ?*

The very bold answer that the Party had been held back by a basic deviation, which was characterised as Left-Nationalist, in the understanding and carrying out of Party policy ever since August 9.

We rightly characterised the imperialist bureaucracy as primarily responsible for producing the crisis, but we underestimated the disruptive line of the policy of the national leadership which enabled the bureaucrats to strike at the national movement and let the Fifth Column get in.

How did this express itself in practice ?

We failed to educate the Congress patriot sharply enough to see where the policy of "struggle" was leading him. The result was that when the struggle collapsed he went demoralised.

We raised the release campaign as a general anti-repression campaign. The result was that the mass of patriots did not see how Gandhiji could be released through a mere campaign when the "struggle" itself failed. The campaigner for release, our comrade, went to jail as a satyagrahi.

In the food campaign it became a wordy exposure of the bureaucracy in general and provoked the individual bureaucrat to ban all meetings in panic and himself run into the arms of hoarder rather than sit with the people's representatives to get and distribute food for the people.

In the production and grow more food campaigns it became the formulation of working class and kisan demands to enable us to organise these campaigns, just like Nehru's National Government to enable the Congress to defend the country : and our demands remained as much on paper as Nehru's'

Inability to run these campaigns as the patriotic job of workers and kisans and the only way for them to win their demands meant that we did not throw the very classes, over whom we have the biggest influence, into the battle for national defence and against the production and food crisis.

That is, we did not do all that we could to attack the creeping national crisis. We remained on the plane of general propaganda,

we awakened the people, we could not transform this awakening into action, therefore, we could not activate the people.

The press-folks were amazed. They had never heard such fearless self-criticism being made by any other political party and that too in public !

The delegates unanimously thought they had learnt the most from this self-criticism. We, Communists, learn our policy best by putting it into practice. We go on improving our political work by examining and re-examining it in terms of our general policy. We are Marxists and believe in the unity of theory and practice and this how we do it. Our policy is not a dry formula but a guide to action, our practice is not blind but comes from our policy. That is why our Party is always able to pull itself up and go ahead.

### **Provincial Reports**

After me followed the Provincial Secretaries one after another and reported on how the Party had grown, how the patriotic camp stood ranged today, and what stage the crisis had actually reached in his own province. This served the purpose not only of the best possible concretisation of Party policy but made the practice of the Party on an all-India plane live in the minds of all delegates.

### **Other Reports**

Then came Ranadive on Production, Sardesai on Food, Namboodripad on Grow More food, Arun on Students, Kunhianandan on Bal Sangham and Kanak, Yesoda, Annapurnamma and Puran Mehta on Women. These comrades not only reported on the situation on their specific front but that whatever victories had been achieved were by carrying our Party policy on these fronts these mass campaigns opened out entirely new prospects of forging ahead.

### **Smash Through**

There was never any opposition to Resolution. In discussions Kisan and T.U. comrades had raised the problem of "difficulties" in the way. They were all answered. By the time it came to voting on the Resolution the comrades unanimously said there were no doubts left, but when a Communist raises the problem of difficulties in the discussion of policy we know it is the remnant of lingering doubts.

Therefore I made a Concluding Report and explained to the T U. comrades how production policy was not only good patriotism but also good Trade Unionism and to our Kisan comrades how Grow More Food was not only in the country's, in the Kisan's own interest. They saw it when I turned the approach upside down. Instead of beginning by saying that it was the concrete application of general Party Policy, I began with describing how crisis affects the worker as worker, and Kisan as Kisan, and what each has to do in his own interest if he is to exist. It showed how our slogans were the only way out for him.

Lest "difficulties" yet stand in the way I smashed the problems of difficulties itself on the head.

*"Every real job poses difficulties. We are Communists who smash our way through difficulties and do not just go on mounting them".*

The delegates thus got it straight and bear that difficulties can and should be smashed through. The Party Congress had served the purpose.

### **What Was New**

Then I recounted for them what was new in what they had discussed and decided.

We had acquired a new and deeper understanding of the national crisis and a dearer realisation of how it was dragging the country towards ruin and civil war.

We had learnt how to throw our own class, the working class, into the battle. As yet we were only sitting upon it. The full weight of the working class and peasantry had not yet been thrown against the crisis.

Our production and grow more food campaigns would inaugurate a new era in our national history, bring forward the working class and the peasantry as the prime factors in the interests of the entire people, as unifiers and saviours of the nation.

We were going to attack the crisis from all ends by rousing the Congressman, Leaguer, workers, peasant, woman, child—all. Before their combined assault it could not last. We shall break through. The crisis can exist only as long as the people do not act and the patriots are divided.

## **FORGE A SINGLE CAMP OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND LIBERATION**

### **Our Congress Inspires Us with New Confidence & New Understanding For New Practice**

#### **Comrades**

After ten days of strenuous labour we now come to conclude the Sessions of the first historic Congress of the Communist Party. My mind goes back to November 1933 when, almost 10 years ago the provisional Central Committee, then formed, set itself the task of unifying all the Communist groups in the country and decided to call the first Congress of the Party. That decision we have implemented in this Congress. During these ten years we have welded all the Communist groups in our country into a single strong Communist party.

The last great Communist group to merge into our Party was the Ghadr-Kirti group which joined up as late as in 1941 and whose veteran leaders like Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna are present in this Congress as delegates.

During these ten years our Party has grown from the stage of scattered groups to a centralised and politically unified Party. During these years we passed through different vicissitudes. Our Party was declared illegal in 1934. Our Party and our leaders faced repression several times. We emerged ever stronger through the fire of repression. Why ?

Because we remained true to the teaching of our great masters—Marx, Lenin and Stalin, and learned to draw our strength always from the working class, from the toiling and patriotic masses, from the great heritage of our National movement.

We learned to apply this great teaching better and better to the specific conditions and problems of our country and our people.

We learned to evolve policies and practice which has enabled our class and our Party to unite and lead our people ever more effectively in their fight for national and social liberation.

At every decisive turning point in the life of our nation during the last ten years, our party has put forward a correct policy and adopted a correct practice. That is why our Party has grown as no other Party has during the same period.

From a narrow group in the Labour movement, our Party and



our class has come to occupy the place of an independent national force playing a leading part in moulding the life and destiny of our country and our people.

### **New Epoch**

To-day when our country is passing through the gravest national crisis, created by the external peril of Jap invasion and the internal peril precipitated by the policy of the imperialist bureaucracy, it is our party alone which has a correct lead and a correct policy.

Our politics is or must be the politics of the entire Nation. For we alone have the patriotic policy possible under the circumstances, a policy which all have to implement if the nation is to survive.

Our slogans must be the slogans of all the people, if the country is to be defended, if it is to march forward to freedom in company with the other freedom-loving nations of the world.

Our practice—the work we do for uniting the people for food, production, defence and the release of leaders, must become the common practice, the common work of all the patriotic parties, of all the people, if the deadlock is to be broken and the energies of the masses are to be liberated to forge the destiny of our people in the war of liberation.

The patriotic masses, through their own gruelling experience of the last 10 months have come to appreciate our policy and admire our practice. Our party has increased in power and prestige. We are ranked as the third great patriotic party after the National Congress and the Muslim League. All this is no longer enough. The crisis deepens and the peril to our country grows.

The point is to swing the awakened masses from appreciation and admiration to action for forging unity for defence, unity to stop sabotage and crush the Fifth Column, unity to achieve Congress-League agreement on the basis of self-determination, unity for food and production.

Only when we do this will our Party be able to come forward as the national political force No. 1, leading the National Congress and the Muslim League by the hand towards unity and National Government. The responsibility of achieving this rests on the shoulders of our party. Either we fulfil it or the country goes under our Party and class must acquire the power and the capacity to fulfil it and we must be filled with determination to fulfil it and

create for our country a glorious future worthy of her great and ancient past.

This First Congress has inspired us with the determination to fulfil the task. It has also equipped us with the weapon which will enable us to fulfil the task. It has infused in us the confidence that our Party which has achieved so much in the past is capable of fulfilling it.

That is why this Congress inaugurates a new epoch in the life of our Party, one in which our Party has to come forward as the leading national force in our country, capable of uniting the patriotic parties and people into a "single camp of national liberation", for defending the motherland in the unfolding struggle against fascism.

It is no accident that while our Congress is in Session there comes in the news of the dissolution of the Communist International and Stalin's call to patriots of all countries. The one event fits in with the other. The call of both to the Party is the same : achieve the unity of the people now for defence and freedom of the motherland, for victory over fascism.

### **Political Unity**

Comrades, our first Congress was a Congress of political unification of the Party. The Congress so to say set the seal upon the complete political unity in the Party ranks which has matured during the past ten years. How did it express itself ?

In the unanimous adoption of the Political Report and the Resolution after 8 days deliberation, in the unanimous adoption of the new Constitution, in the unanimous election of the Central Committee and finally in the unanimous election of the General Secretary.

Let no Comrade run away with the idea that this political unity is a formal thing. It is not. It is the greatest asset of our Party. Where does it arise from ?

Our unity of purpose comes from the common goal, the common programme;

Our unity of theory and principles from loyalty to Marxism-Leninism;

Our unity of understanding is matured by the common practice of years;

Our unity of action is born of the common discipline of the Party organisation.

The political unity of our Party has been tempered in the fire of struggles for the unification of the class, and for the emancipation of the country.

Comrades, the political unity which has characterised our Congress, has to be preserved as the apple of our eye, has to be strengthened, so that our Party becomes a disciplined political army—a worthy brother Party of the great Bolshevik Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Comrades, this Congress has not only unified us politically but strengthened us. It has given us a deeper political understanding of the national crisis and of the strategy of solving it. What did the Congress teach us about the national crisis? In our country the nation is in crisis. The whole people are dragged into it. Who has brought this about? The imperialist bureaucracy—which will not defend the country with the co-operation of the people, which will not reorganise economy for effective defence in the closest co-operation with the various sections of the people. What is the result?

### **Our Strategy**

With the fascist invader at the door our front is weakly held, our economic rear is cracking up. Having said this, the Congress warns us : don't run away with an abstract understanding of the crisis : that the imperialist bureaucracy is cracking up automatically, inevitably. It is sitting on the top of the nation—and that is what creates the crisis. An understanding of the crisis which views it only as the automatic and inevitable cracking up of imperialism and nothing else leads to negative policies, policies of passivity which ultimately open the door to Fifth Column policies.

The imperialist bureaucracy has created the crisis for the nation because the patriotic parties of our country allowed it to do so by pursuing negative and defeatist policies. The analysis of the crisis which the Congress gave showed clearly how the bureaucracy cleared the way for the Fifth Column and how the National leadership by its negative and defeatist policy fed the Fifth Column by throwing the patriotic masses into its arms.

The call of the Congress is clear : it is the imperialist bureaucracy which creates the crisis by refusing the people the power to defend their country. But this policy is doomed. It conflicts with the

interests of the entire Indian people, it conflicts with the task of defence itself. It conflicts with the vital interests of the British, American and the Chinese people. That is exactly the reason why our patriotic parties have to unite and have to go all out to unite the people for defence. As soon as they do this the imperialist policy collapses. The balance shifts in favour of the people. National government of National defence is won—we march forward to freedom.

What is the strategy of solving the crisis which emerges from this analysis ? It is very simple :

—All fire against the fascist invader and his agent the Fifth Column.

—Together with the patriotic parties to unite the entire people for defence of the motherland in alliance with the United Nations.

—Isolate and bend the imperialist bureaucracy.

Comrade Joshi summed up this strategy in the following pithy slogans : Crush the Fifth Column, Rouse the Patriots, Bend the Bureaucrats.

### **Deviation Tracked Down**

On the basis of this understanding and analysis of the crisis, the Congress examined the new alignment that has been taking place in the camp of the patriots. It examined the practice of the Party to find out how fast we have been assisting this realignment and how fast it was leading to the solution of the crisis. What did it find ?

It found that we had awakened the patriotic masses to the disastrous effects of the policy of sabotage of defence, we had awakened them to the need for unity but were yet unable to pass from awakening to unity in action on a really large scale.

We had tremendously extended our mass influence and our mass organisations on the basis of this awakening, but in the last three months when we were attempting to go over from awakening to action our progress was slowing down. Our achievements were dominantly of a negative and defensive character.

The Congress tracked this all down to the presence of the Left Nationalist deviation in our agitation and practice.

How did the Left Nationalist deviation express itself in our work ? It expressed itself in two ways : We exposed the bureaucracy as the root cause of the political crisis, as the creator of the Fifth Column, as the agency mainly responsible for the food crisis. But we toned down the criticism and exposure of the negative and defeatist policy of the patriotic parties, especially that of the National Congress.

The result was that the edge of our struggle to isolate the Fifth Column the patriotic masses was blunted and thus we were not able to transform the mass urge for unity into a mass swing for unity in action. Comrade Joshi gave concrete examples of these lapses and showed how that prevented us from bringing about a mass swing among Congress patriots for defence, for accepting self-determination as the only basis for unity, how it has prevented us from bringing about a mass swing for the release of Congress leaders among the League patriots.

The Left Nationalist deviation expressed itself in another way. It expressed itself in our failure to rouse our own class for taking the initiative for building unity for defence. The working class holds the key to national defence in its hands—viz, production. But so far our work on this front was negative and defensive. We kept production going and prevented the Fifth Column from doing sabotage. But we have failed so far in rousing the working class to the patriotic mass enthusiasm for raising production and improving transport. We kept the peasant from harm's way but have not roused the Kisan to the patriotic mass enthusiasm to grow more food.

This is how the Congress tracked down the Left Nationalist deviation. Its negative aspect was our failure to expose sufficiently sharply the negative policy of the nationalist leadership. Its positive aspect was our failure to inspire patriotic fervour in our own class and to rouse it to implement the policy of raising production for defence. It was quite clear that the root of our stagnation was in this deviation.

The Congress gave the call to root out this deviation.

### **Working Class Must Lead**

Comrades, the Congress has laid special emphasis on certain mass campaigns. What are these ? They are such as will

enable us to root out the Left Nationalist deviation and lead our people forward into active mass effort for building unity for defence.

It has called upon us to redouble our efforts to unite the patriotic masses for civil defence, for A. R. P. and for the support of the armies.

It has called upon us to make the acceptance of self-determination and the repudiation of sabotage as the basis of "Release the Leaders and End the Deadlock" campaign. Our campaign for National Unity must be a campaign for Self-Determination among Congress patriots and for support to the Release campaign among the League patriots.

Above all the Congress has called upon us to go to our own class; to the working class and the toiling peasantry and rouse them to a mass patriotic effort for raising production, for solving the food problem. It is here that we can and must bring about the biggest turn. If we can swing the working class and peasantry into a gigantic effort for production, which we surely can, as Comrade Joshi so well showed us, we can bring about a complete political turn among the entire patriotic masses and be able to solve the crisis.

Such is the significance of the slogans of action which this Congress has worked out.

Comrades, this Congress has given us a new understanding of the crisis and the forces behind it. It has enabled us to track down the deviation which was holding up our tempo of advance. The Congress has shown us where we have to make a decisive turn in our campaigns so that we may be able to throw the full strength of our class and the class-ally into the fray against the Fifth Column and for the solution of the crisis.

### **Smash Difficulties**

The Congress has given you this lead in a general form. It has used your own experience to arrive at this lead. Now you have to go back to your provinces and districts in the way of actually implementing that slogan and lead. For a Bolshevik difficulties are only to be sized up and smashed. Let us get rid of the habit of explaining our past failures. Let us learn to advance from the experience of past failures to planning future successes.

The Bombay Party Committee, which was once in the vanguard is to-day lagging behind. Once the Bombay comrades begin tackling their difficulties in a Bolshevik way they can yet make a turn which will again place them in the leading vanguard. *By organising a really successful All-in production conference in Bombay city, they could once again lead a new upsurge of the entire Indian working class as they did in 1934 with their All-India Textile Conference and in 1940 with the great MAHAGAI CONFERENCE.*

### Be Worthy of Mission

Comrades, our Session concludes on the eve of decisive-battles in this world war of liberation. In our country the National crisis has deepened and broadened. But so has the power of our Party to solve it. The dissolution of the Comintern and Stalin's call has come at this moment and charged us with the mission of leading our people out of the crisis straight into the battle line of the war against fascism, for India's freedom, for the freedom of the world. All that we have done, seen and experienced at this Congress should inspire us to be worthy to shoulder that mission.

We are equal to that task. For as a working class Party we have to-day reached that maturity when we alone carry forward the best traditions of the nationalist movement.

—We are carrying forward the *torch of national unity* which can only be attained through our policy of self-determination.

—We are carrying forward the *torch of patriotism* which is to-day to unite the People for defence.

—We are carrying forward the *torch of the service of the people* by leading and uniting the people for food and production.

—We are carrying forward the *torch of self-sacrificing crusade*—for under the banner of our Party are gathered in thousands the most stalwart patriots, the bravest sons and daughters of the working class and peasantry.

—This is no accident or boast but a reality.

Comrades, we derive our *Strength* from the masses of our people, from their unbounded patriotism, from the rich heritage of our National movement. We draw our *Power* from the weapon of Marxism-Leninism, from the guidance of Stalin. Our *Determination* emanates from our burning hatred of tyranny and oppression, from the love of the motherland, from the love of the people.

**OUR VICTORY WILL COME OUT OF OUR TIRELESS WORK.**

## **WORKERS AND PEASANTS! LEAD THE PATRIOTIC CRUSADE**

### **Increase Production—Grow More Food—Save The Nation**

The slogan of a mass Communist Party as the builder of national unity had been accepted by the Party along with the policy of national unity for national defence.

### **Mass Party This Year**

The political resolution endorsed and emphasised its need.

Very few of the delegates realised how near a mass party we were. When the quotas of practical-organisational work, in carrying through the national unity campaigns, offered by various provincial delegates were added up and announced they came as a revelation to all.

**By the end of the year Party membership  
will go up to 56,000**

Having registered an increase of 251% during the course of last year a further increase of 260% was planned. No Party had ever grown with such a tempo; only a Communist Party could grow this way. All the new rising sons and daughters of our people will be inside our Party.

Whole timers would increase by 130% and be over 10% of the total Party membership.

No other Party, not even the National Congress, has such a large proportion of whole timers nor such a large number of them. They are a guarantee that the Party policy will be taken to the people, and the people organised as no other Party has ever done before.

Trade Union membership will be taken to 5,60,000 ;  
an increase of 87%, double the highest record ever reached by the T.U.C.

*Kisan Sabha membership will be taken to 10,15,000 ;*  
an increase of 160%, double the highest record ever reached by the All-India Kisan Sabha;

*Student Federation membership to 1,33,000 ;*  
an increase of 340%, the highest ever recorded by the All-India Students Federation.



**Womens' organisation (Mahila Sangham) will go up to 1,60,000—an increase of 300%.**

**—Childrens organisation (Bal Sangh) will go up to 1,66,000 an increase of 1744%.**

**Volunteers will grow to 1,40,000 —an increase of 340%.**

**A Party Fund of Rs. 5,00,000 will be raised from the people to finance the National Unity campaigns and keep the party organisation going.**

### **New Political Reality**

**Never before has such a great patriotic organisational drive been planned in our country. What will it mean politically?**

**Our party will emerge as a mass Party and become transformed from a mass political force to a mass political organisation.**

**Over 2 million organised toilers will stand organised behind the Party, just the sections of the people in whose hands rests the fate of the country today.**

**The Party will be able to move the toilers in millions by setting into motion the organised 2 millions.**

**The Party will acquire independent political influence not only over the toiling millions but over the Indian people as a whole. After the fulfilment of these quotas by the end of the year, the striking power of our Party will be greater than that of the Congress though not necessarily our influence.**

**The year will see a growing mass Communist Party running nonstop mass campaigns, building mass organisation, moving millions rousing patriotism all round, for the defence of our motherland to implement the elementary patriotic tasks of the hour. How can the national crisis last after this ? We will blast our way to victory, together with our fellow-patriots and on the strength of our people.**

### **No Illusions**

**I warned the comrades against any cheap illusions.**

**“There is no short-cut to National Government....we have to run these campaigns against all odds, build national unity bit by bit. Only to the extent that we do this can we go forward...we are fighting the greatest battle of our lives, the battle of our own**

motherland in the great company of the Soviet people and all freedom-loving humanity Bolshevism is the best patriotism for our nation today Every patriot will see it more and more as we go ahead Our party has the best team of patriots that exists in our country The path to victory lies through our own tireless daily work ”

### **Unanimity All round**

The Political Resolution was passed unanimously

Adhikari proposed the new Party Statutes suiting our legal status A group of comrades had been working on it and dealing with all the amendments The Statutes were passed unanimously

I proposed the panel of the new Central Committee, retaining the best older and growing leaders and including the best of the new rising ones

When Adhikari proposed the name of the General Secretary he was greeted with such cheers that his speech remained undelivered

Which party could demonstrate such unanimity, complete unity in political understanding, perfect unity in its entire ranks, unity inside its leadership, unity behind the leadership? Just because we are so united ourselves and national unity is the only way out for our nation's existence and freedom, we shall be able to build national unity in action and win National Government for National Defence and Freedom

Adhikari on a brilliant report (extracts appear on another page) summed up the Session

All the comrades said, “he has left nothing more to be said, all that has to be done is work, work, work ”

### **Farewell !**

What the Congress meant to the delegates and visitors came out clear in their farewell speeches

Dhuren, a tram worker, described how when the crisis began the party had only 10 or 12 tramway workers as members The union leadership was divided, yet they kept trams running and today all tram worker-leaders except one had come over to the Party The Congress gave him the confidence that not only the tram but every section of Calcutta's workers could be activated through the policy of the Party.

Ranadhir, the Chittagong Secretary said :

“The home of the heroes is the most bombed district on your eastern most frontier and the heroes are behind the bars. After this Congress we will be able to hold on harder and longer against the Japs for we know better that you in the rear are getting on with a new tempo and nothing will stop the Party from uniting all patriotic organisations for national defence, on which will depend the fate of our own home district.”

Nani 13 year Malabari peasant girl, had come as the leader of the children's cultural squad, had earned for herself a place in the affection and respect of every delegate, when it became known that she alone had enrolled 75 Mahila Sangh members and was herself its secretary. She said. “In the name of the Kayyur comrades, work to fulfil the quotas you have taken up, as soon as you can.”

Muzaffar, founder-member of the Party on behalf of the presidium concluded the session with the following words :

“The first Congress of the party is over. The party has taken on itself the greatest job of its life. Let us go out to fulfil it !”

His words came at once as an exhortation and a blessing.

## **CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA, HELD IN BOMBAY, IN JUNE 1943**

*(Facts collected from the synopsis (in Bengali) of the political resolution of the First Party Congress of Communist Party of India held in June 1943. Synopsis (in Bengali) published by Bengal Provincial Committee)*

### **First Party Congress, 1943**

**Total Number of Delegates :                      ...                      139**

<b>Intellectuals</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Peasants</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Workers</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Zamindars</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Small Landlords</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Businessman</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>1</b>
		<hr/>
		<b>139</b>

Muslims	...	13
Sikhs	...	8
Untouchables	...	3
Parsis	...	2
Jain	...	1
Women Delegates	...	13

### **Party Members Strength : C. P. I.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
1933 (end)	150
1934 (end)	200
1936 (early part)	600
1939 September	1500
1942 July	4400
1943 Lenin Day	9000
1943 May Day	15563

### **Strength of Party and Mass Organisations**

	1943 <b>Lenin Day</b>	1943 <b>May Day</b>
Party Members	9308*	15563
Whole-time Workers	2015	2637
Trade Unions	197620	301400
Kisan Sabha	295000	385370
Students	25822	39155
Women	22400	41100
Kishore Bahini	6400	9000
Volunteers	24610	32166

(\*) This figure is 308 more than the earlier given figure.

**Introduction of Photographs of Notable Delegates to the  
First Party Congress of C.P.I. as published in  
the Front page of the Special Number of  
“PEOPLE’S WAR” of June 13, 1943 :**

**Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna :** Founder of the GHADR PARTY, Ex-President of All India Kisan Sabha, Spent 27 years in jail.

**Suryawathi :** Farmer's Daughter. One of the most active Communist girls in Andhra. President of the Kistna District Mahila Sangham. These girls have raised a women's organisation of 8000 membership and have vowed to raise it to 40,000.

**Bhogale :** Textile worker. President of Girni Kamgar Union. Member of the Bombay Committee of Communist Party of India.

**Kunhianandan :** 16 year old Bal Sangham leader of Kerala with 3000 teenagers organised in his Taluk (Chirakkal)

**Muzzafar Ahmad :** Founder member of the Party. Ten years in jail in Cawnpur and Meerut Conspiracy Cases.

**Yasoda :** Daughter of poor kisan parents. Educated herself through scholarships and became a teacher & Congress worker. Among the very first girl members of the Party in Kerala — now a whole-time Mahila organiser & Secretary of the Party Women's Fraction.

**Jahiruddin :** Peasant leader from Mymensingh.

## **E. K. NAYNAR REMEMBERS THE KAYYOOR HEROES\***

The Kayyoor case gave me much trouble while I was underground.

The Police camped at Kayyoor, following the Kayyoor Case. They stayed in the houses of the landed aristocracy. The police, their spies and gundas created an atmosphere of terror there.

The police and their gundas stole everything out of the peasants houses and sold them. The poor peasants had to suffer indescribable hardships during these days. The police arrested and manhandled numerous peasants. Everyone who had any connection with the peasant union as with other peoples' organisation in Kayyoor and its neighbourhood, were locked up in jail though many were released later.

A case was filed against sixty-one people for the murder of Subrayan. The first accused was Madathil Appu, the second accused was V.V. Kunhambu and I was the third accused. As I was not caught, I was left out later.

The case was first tried at the Mangalore Magistrate's court. The convicts were kept in a jail at a distance of two miles from the court. The trial at this court took about a month. Then the case was committed to the sessions court.

The South Canara Sessions Judge was L.S. Parthasarathy Iyer. Eighty witnesses were examined at the sessions court for the prosecution. It was Barrister A.K. Pillai who appeared for the accused at the sessions court. The prosecutor was M.K. Nambiar. The prosecution tried hard to prove the case and the Barrister A.K. Pillai tried hard to prove the innocence of the accused. Even though the witnesses of the prosecution were coached for one month, their evidences were contradictory. So everyone expected that the case would not hold.

The case was decided on 9 February, 1942. The decision shocked everyone. Comrades, Madathil Appu, Koyilthallit Chirukantan and Potora Kunhambu Nair and Abubekkar were sentenced to be hanged. Chirukantan Krishnan Nair was also sentenced to be hanged. But on consideration that he was minor, it was relented to five years rigorous imprisonment. Eighteen people got various punishments.

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*\*E.K. Naynar sent this note from Thiruvantapuram.*

The others were set free. Those convicted were taken to Cannanore jail.

An appeal was filed at Madras High Court. The famous advocates Rao and Reddy appeared for the accused in the High Court. The High Court rejected the appeal. A big movement was started to save the comrades from the hangman's noose. Thousands of letters, telegrams and resolutions petitioning the Governor and Viceroy to use their power to pardon them, were sent. But the imperialist power rejected all these petitions. As a last resort we decided to appeal to the Privy Council which is the highest court of British empire. Arrangements were made through the famous Barrister D.N. Pritt. But, the Privy Council did not accept the appeal. This plunged the party workers and the masses into dejection and utter helplessness. Their pain became raging anger against British imperialism.

The comrades who were waiting for their last day were not moved by the news that the appeal was rejected. These peasants presented great heroism and courage. A feeling that they were doing something very noble for the peasant movement made them heroic and brave

Twentyninth March 1943 is an unforgettable day in Kerala history. The Kayyoor comrades were hanged in Cannanore Central Jail on that day. They sacrificed their lives for the peasant movement shouting slogans which were to shake the very foundation of British imperialism. Those poor and illiterate comrades born in poor peasant families thought only of the peasant movement even during their last moments.

They died shouting Zindabad for the Communist Party and Peasant Union and became martyrs of the Party.

For the first time in India, four ordinary peasants who were workers of the Peasant Union were hanged. March 29th was declared All India Kisan Day in honour of the Kayyoor martyrs.

P.C. Joshi, Secretary of the Communist Party of India and Comrade Krishna Pillai had visited Cannanore Central Jail to see the Kayyoor comrades for the last time. Joshi had tears in his eyes. But Kayyoor comrades talked to them with a smile on their lips. When they bid farewell, Joshi choked. Later Krishna Pillai said about that last meeting, "I felt the sting of tears at the root of my eyes though I usually never cry."

**Kayyoor Heroes on Eve of Execution**  
*People's War, Sunday, April 11, 1943*

Four young Kisan patriots, already become famous as the

Kayyoor Communists have been hanged on 29th March. Their names are

Madathil Appu, Kunhambu Nair, Chirukandan, Abu Baker.

All of them were below 25 years, barely literate, but they became people's leaders in their village. They took the foremost part in the organisation of the Central Committees themselves, joined the Congress Volunteers and founded the Kisan Sabha. The peasants in that talukha had no tenancy rights, they organised and led a veritable kisan upsurge. The police hated them for their patriotism ; the landlords because they roused and activated the kisans.

A unit of the Malabar special Police was stationed in the area. They went out to scorch Kisan homes and ended by looting them. They caught Kisan workers to interrogate them but began and ended by beating them up. To protest against this highhandedness a demonstration was fixed in Kayyoor village. A police constable came along. His very sight enraged the people; he is reported to have misbehaved with a Muslim peasant woman. The assembled kisans are alleged to have stoned him to death. It is for this reason these comrades have been hanged.

The Sessions Judge admitted that in the incident like that in which so many participated, it is difficult to identify the woman who actually struck the fatal blow and that probably that persons had not been brought before the Court. Still he convicted them.

The High Court summarily rejected the appeal. It stunned all patriots of Malabar Leaders of all parties and all the MLAs and M.L.Cs of the district appealed to the Madras Governor for mercy. A province-wide united front campaign was set afoot but the Governor refused to listen.

It was another shock but soon enough the campaign took a wider turn. From all over the country appeals were made to the Government of India to intervene.

They wrote me a moving letter. They had vowed to fight to death for the freedom of the country when they joined the party : they were not afraid to die, their only regret being that they were dying at the gallows and not on the battle-front, when the Motherland stood in danger of attack from the fascist invaders.

I made a special appeal to the Government, offered to send them to the army or the Jap rear, the day they were released. Which army could have desired better soldiers?

But the Government of India is not ours, a prisoner of its own phrase—"the respect for law and order must be maintained", it



went by red-tape and rejected the appeal, afraid of creating precedents.

After this it seemed a hopeless battle but we did not give up as long as there was any hope of saving them for the service of the Motherland. Appeal was filed before the Privy Council, our British Comrades secured the free services of the eminent counsel, D.N. Pritt. This too was of no avail.

The British comrades tried the very last changes : they moved some Labour and Liberal M.Ps. and even some church dignitaries to appeal to the King. That too failed.

Four of the best sons of the Indian Kisan are no more. No Indian Patriot who heard their tale, refused to do whatever lay in his power to save them. Across the seven seas sons of the British workers, leaders of the British Communist Party, struggled to save them as if they were their own brothers. They won the support of the best sons of the British people who worked for these four comrades of ours as if they were their own countrymen.

Sons of the soil, they adopted Communism, the cause of mankind, as their own. Young in age, they joined the unconquerable army of fighters for freedom, the Communist Party, whose fighting detachments operate in every country in the world. They lived as true patriots, they died as noble martyrs.

### **The Families of the Kayyoor Heroes**

**N. M. Joshi**

*(General Secretary of All-India Trade Union Congress)*

[ The following note on the families and accompanying letter received from N. M Joshi is very revealing, not only of their needs, but of general Indian conditions—Ed. L. M ]

Thank you for the money sent to us for the Kayyoor Dependants. We received £250 on July 13 and a further draft for £250 reached us on September 15. This makes a total of £500, or Rupees 6,655 2s. Regarding the distribution, we consulted Comrade E.M.S. Namboodripad, a well-known Communist peasant leader of Malabar, and on his advice we have decided to divide the available amount evenly among the four families. This we feel is the best course, as the slightly less poor family has more members, while the very poor family (Abu Baker's) has only two members. We are making arrangements for the distribution, which will take us a month, as Kayyoor is a remote village. I am sending a note on the four families.

**Abu Baker's Family**

A mother of 65 years old and a brother of 15 years. They have no means of livelihood. They were entirely dependent on him. They are also harassed by their relations, who, as rigid and orthodox Muslims, did not approve of their association with Communists and with struggles waged by the Kisan Sabha ( peasant organisation ). Their only property is a small thatched house.

**Chirukandan's Family**

Mother about 45 years, sister about 15 years. No means of livelihood. No house; the house that they had was destroyed by the Malabar Special Police during their stay in the area just after the Kayyur incident. They are now living in a thatched shed (with no walls) put up on the foundations, of the former house.

**Madathil Appu's Family**

Father about 60 years, is a priest among Thiyyas, backward community of Malabar. Mother about 55 years. Elder brother, an active worker in the Kisan organisation, about 30 years, and his wife a women's organisation worker, about 22 years. Sister about 18 years. The money will be divided between the father, mother and sister. They have leased property of 5 acres—and get an income of about Rs. 30/- a year (£2 6s.)

**Kunhambu Nair's Family**

Father about 67 years; mother 50 years. Elder brother, an active worker in the Kisan organisation, about 37 years, younger brother also a Kisan worker, 22 years. Youngest brother—15 years old. Younger sister about 24 years. Two wives of elder brother, both about 27 years old. Own wife, about 21 years, a women's organisation worker. The money will be divided between the father, mother, wife, younger brother and sister who are dependent on him. They have leased property of 4 acres, but because they pay less rent, their income is slightly more than that of Madathil Appu's family—i.e. about Rs. 50/- a year (just under £4).

[ The Fund for the relief of the families now stands at £650. The target is £1,000. Donations from persons or organisations should be sent to R. Bridgeman, Treasurer, Kayyur Dependents' Fund, 9, Southampton Place, London, W.C.I. An army private, sending 30s. from himself and his fellows, writes: "We were very deeply stirred by the moving article by P.C. Joshi in the August Labour Monthly, and fervently hope that events will very soon prove that the Indian martyrs did not die in vain."—ED. L.M.]

## **FROM UNDER THE GALLOWS KAYYOOR COMRADES' STIRRING CALL TO UNITE AND DEFEND THE COUNTRY**

These comrades are Communist Kisan leaders of Kasargode Taluk, South Kanara. Risen from the ranks of the peasants, they led and built the heroic peasant movement in that district during the years 1938-1941, against the oppression of the Jenmis (landlords) and government. It was while leading one of these protest demonstrations that on the 28th March 1941, a police constable, came into conflict with the processionists, sustained injuries, and died.

The Sessions Judge was of opinion that the man who dealt the fatal blow may not even be before the court, but he held the four comrades to be constructively liable for murder, and sentenced them to death. The Madras High Court confirmed the sentence.

Our heroic comrades are facing death courageously as patriots should. From the shadow of the gallows they have sent this inspiring message of courage and hope. this mighty call to the 400 millions of our great land to unite and go forth to smash the Fascists who come to defile our Motherland, a call to sacrifice our all at the altar of national liberation.

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We believe that you might have known by this time that our Mercy Petition has been rejected by the Viceroy of India too and that we are nearer to the gallows than before. We are only overjoyed to hear this rejection news which may of course be unwelcome to others. The only appeal now remaining is in the Privy Council. We don't bother ourselves about the final outcome of the appeal. We don't care about its results. Our selves are not our own for we believe that we belong to the peoples of the world. We feel proud to die for the cause of our country. Don't think that we are cowards ; We are fully prepared to face death boldly as true patriots and martyrs. If we do embrace gallows now, our sacrifice will forever be commemorated by posterity. We consider it a special privilege, and we are only proud to have had this opportunity of facing death in the cause of our national freedom. We are

spending every minute of our life behind the prison-bars singing joyfully songs in praise of our Holy Motherland. The heroic end of patriots like Bhagat Singh gives us inspiration. We also remember the numerous hardships Comrade Lenin—the Leader of the World Proletariat—had to encounter and surmount before he could smash the Tsarist regime by a successful revolution.

We had a letter from Com. Kumaramangalam informing us that the appeal has been filed in the Privy Council and that the people in general and our Communist Party in particular are doing their utmost and everything humanly possible for them to save our lives. We get this very same news from our Kerala comrades too who are often coming to us for interviews.

We are only too glad to hear that our comrades outside are straining every nerve of theirs to rally the Indian people along with the peoples of the United Nations to crush Fascism and save the future world from aggression and domination over the weak by the strong. We are sorry that we are not able to contribute our quota of work to fight against the Jap brutes and for the independence of our Motherland.

Our earnest request from behind the prison-bars to our comrades is that they should by dint of hard and sincere work set an example to the people and inspire in them courage and enthusiasm to come forward as one man and sacrifice their all for the national cause. We are not worried, neither are we dispirited. The history of many a heroic martyr of our land gives us enough inspiration and consolation to face death boldly for the noble cause of our country. We do fully believe the peoples of the world will emerge victorious in the end and the future of the world will be bright and glorious. Forge National Unity by all means ; that is the only path for our national salvation.

**LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST PARTY ! INQUILAB,  
ZINDABAD !**

With Red Greetings,

Sd. MADATHIL APPU,  
ABUBAKER,

CHIRUKANDAN,  
KUNHAMBU NAIR.

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# APPENDICES

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## THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY ON WORLD WAR II

Chamberlain and his lying press carries on the menacing propaganda that Hitler has stopped his persecution of the Communists. The News of Thaelmann's release is circulated twice every month. The Communists are said to have stopped their struggle against Hitler after the Soviet-German Pact While Reuter reports about the suppression of monarchists and Catholics etc; the vigorous persecution of the Communists in Germany is never even mentioned. The fact, however remains that the Communist Party is the only well organised underground mass party which is to-day the decisive leader of the anti-Hitler forces of popular opposition. It is the Communist Party which has persistently exposed the warmongering and aggressive policy of Hitler and which now in the period of war is fighting under the slogan of a People's Revolution and for the overthrow of Hitler.

In this manifesto issued by the German Communist Party soon after the outbreak of the war, the new treacherous role of the emigrant leaders of German Social-democracy is sharply brought out. The corrupt individuals who joined the monarchists and junkers in 1918 to drown the German Social Revolution in a sea of blood are to-day repeating the same performance. They are not only refusing to join hands with the Communists and the Social-democratic workers who in Germany are unitedly fighting for a people's revolution, but are in open league with Chamberlain's intrigue for a Right-Wing coup in Germany. They support the British sponsored Freedom Party of Monarchists and industrialists which calls for a so-called democratic regime and proclaims a war against the Nazis as well as against the Communists.

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Miserable instigators of a counter-revolution which 20 years back prepared the ground for the victory of Fascism, they are now acting as Chamberlain's and Daladier's agents in setting up a reactionary regime which would be a tool of anti-Soviet war. They want to enslave the German people to the will of British finance capital, they do not want peace. They want to drive German people in Europe into another disastrous war. *The communist party declares that they will have nothing to do with these traitors to socialism—these enemies of the German people.*

The Communist Party of Germany in contradistinction to the other trends in the German Opposition has always defended the conception that the liberation of the German people from the fascist dictatorship would not come from outside (by war) but would be the result of the struggle of the masses of the people for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. Therefore the Communist for years have concentrated all their forces for the development of the mass struggle against Hitler's war policy and developed a strong movement of the German people for peace.

Closely bound up with the masses and always at the head of the movement against the Hitler regime, our party has sought to do everything to unite the divided Opposition and thereby to multiply its forces. The Berne Conference (of the Communists Party of Germany) greeted the initiative of the chairman of our party.

The enemies of the people of France are the fascists, the men of February 6, who with the open complicity of Daladier formed cells in the army, organised their shock troops, and are preparing to intensify the policy of reaction which is sweeping over our country.

The enemies of the people of France are the capitalists, who with their servile government and the socialist leaders of the trade unions wish to impose a regime of slavery and misery upon the working masses.

The enemies of the people of France are the financial magnates, who enrich themselves out of the war and want it to last, while the working population of France are plunged into poverty and misery.

**No civil peace with the warmongers !**

The Communists have always fought and will continue in the



future to fight relentlessly the big capitalists, the de Wendels, the Schneiders and other armament manufacturers, for whom war is invariably an excellent business

Civil peace with these people ? Civil peace with their agents, the La Rocques, the Maurras and other fascists ? *Never, Never*, reply the people of France, whilst leaving to the Socialists, to Leon Blum and Paul Faure, the sorry privilege of earning the plaudits of all these elegant gentlemen for their anti-Communist campaign, and who will experience the usual lot of lackeys of being rewarded for their services with kicks, for the methods of reactionaries are everywhere the same. After having crushed the Communists, they will turn upon the others, as was done in Germany

*No, no civil peace with the warmongers. No civil peace with the armament manufacturers. Against them, against the enemies of the people, against reaction, the French workers will be united and will triumph*

### **The capitalist world versus the socialist**

The capitalist world presents to our eyes a spectacle of disorder and incoherence. On the other hand, the country of Socialism is triumphing, the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin is bringing well-being and independence to the peoples of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, liberated from the despotism of the Polish Government

The peoples of the whole world are turning their eyes to the country of Socialism, in which capitalism has been abolished for ever, the country which has put an end to the exploitation of man by man, the country of human happiness, liberty and peace

It is because the Soviet Union has destroyed capitalism that it is the object of capitalist attacks, But that which calls for the hatred of the capitalists wins it the love and confidence of the workers

And if to-day the French capitalists attack Communist Party, if they out-law it, it is because they know that it is an obstacle to their policy of social reaction servitude and war

### **Workers of France unite !**

*But the communist party of France, the expression of the French working class, the expression of the people of France, still lives, its leaders are at their posts and nothing can prevent the*

*French communists from continuing their work of human emancipation. The communist party, Your party, which earns the hatred of the capitalists but is sure of your confidence appeals; workers of France unite !*

Let us unite in order to obtain the release of the defenders of peace, imprisoned on the orders of the war-profiteers.

Let us unite in order to secure the restoration of democratic liberty, to enforce respect for liberty of thought, of the press and the right of combination.

Let us unite in order to defend municipal rights and to demand that the communist town councils shall be in the hands of the elected representatives of the people and not in the hands of commissioners appointed by the Government.

Let us unite in the workshop, in the rural districts, in the army, in order to defend our rights, conscious of the immense power we represent.

Let us unite in order to fight fascism and reaction.

Let us unite in order to fight imperialist war and to demand that peace be established.

Let us unite in order to give France a Government which will assure to the workers bread, liberty and peace.

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE ON WORLD WAR II

The Communist Party of France sends fraternal greetings to the elected representatives of the people, faithful to the cause of the people who for having fought against the imperialist war and advocated peace, have been thrown into prison by the reactionary government which imposes upon France the will of the bankers of London

Greetings to these men who have remained steadfast in the face of repeated threats and the most alluring offers, they set a magnificent example of courage, they show the path of duty to the workers who remain in the factories, to the peasants, to the proletarian soldiers, and prove to be worthy comrades of Dimitroff, the hero of the Leipzig trial

Greetings to all Communists who, in prison, in the daily struggle, maintain undiminished faith in victory, their will to fight with all their might, in order to bar the way to the imperialist war-mongers

Greetings to all those who, true to the teaching given by Karl Liebknecht to the international proletariat, do not forget that "the enemy is at home," and that the French workers have to combat fascism in France

**"No to the war of the London Bankers!"**

The Communists hate Hitler and the regime of violence he represents, which is directed against the workers. But we deny that the men of Munich, the capitalists, exploiters and the patrons of Abetz, have the right to talk about anti-Hitlerism at the moment when they are themselves introducing fascist rule in France.

*The war which has been imposed upon the French people is a war of the capitalists, a war in which British imperialism is opposed*

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Communist Party of India*

*to German imperialism, whilst the people of France is reserved the mission of carrying out the thests of the London bankers.*

These English bankers, who impose the war on the French people, are the same people who played Hitler's game against France by concluding a naval and air agreement with him. They are the same people who assassinated the Spanish Republic with the assistance of Leon Blum. They are the same people who made every effort to save Hitler in September, 1938, and sacrificed democratic Czechoslovakia to him, regardless of French security.

There is no reason why the French people should bear the cost of the conflict of interest between the capitalists of London, Paris and Berlin. The French people do not forget that in January, 1919, at the moment when the Spartacus League wanted to establish power in Germany, the big property owners of the three capitals, with the assistance of Noske, drowned the revolution in blood.

The German workers, our Communist comrades in Germany, are fighting Hitler in their own country, which they wish to liberate and which they will liberate. The French workers, with their Communist Party, have to fight the fascists, and the imperialist warmongers in France itself.

It stands to the credit of the Communist Party of France that it has fought Hitlerism without respite and without an armistice, and has always maintained that the struggle against fascism demands, in the first place, that the French fascists the enemies of the French people, be rendered harmless.

**Who are the enemies of the French people ?**

The enemies of the French are the men of the Comités Forges, who already in the war of 1914-1918 sacrificed millions of human lives to their capitalist interests; and who to-day want a fresh slaughter of the working class in the hope of dominating it more easily.

The enemies of the people of France are the politicians who are devoid of honour, who in obedience to the orders of the English financiers betrayed the interests of France at Munich and are prepared to shed the blood of millions of Frenchman for the profit of the imperialist.

Britain and France on the one hand, and Germany, on the other, is being waged for colonies, sources of raw materials, for domination over sea routes, for the subjugation and exploitation of foreign peoples. As is well-known, Great Britain is a huge empire with a colonial population of 480,000,000 while France possesses colonies inhabited by 70,000,000 people. Germany, which as a result of the first imperialist war was deprived of its colonies, is now putting forward claims for a division of the colonial booty in the hands of the British and French imperialists. The bourgeoisie of England and France, however, have no intention of letting their huge possessions slip out of their hands. They want to hold undivided sway over hundreds of millions of colonial slaves, to maintain their imperialist positions, to ensure the possibility of new conquests, to enfeeble their rival and to place it in a position of dependence on them. Herein lies the essence of the present war. *The clash of arms between the warring states is for hegemony in Europe, for colonial possessions in Africa and in other parts of the globe, for oil, coal, iron, rubber, and not all at in defence of "democracy", "liberty", "international Law," and the guarantee of the independence of small countries and peoples, as is howled by the bourgeois press and the social-democratic deceivers of the working class.*

The interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie also determine the position of the majority of the capitalist states not directly participating in the war. Their neutrality policy is hypocritical through and through and above all is this true of the neutrality of the biggest capitalist state—the U.S.A. The American bourgeoisie did not lift a finger when Japan attacked China. What is more they are in actual fact the chief contractors of war supplies to Japanese imperialism. Under the flag of neutrality, the American imperialists are unflinching in the Far East so as to enfeeble Japan and China, and then, basing themselves on their might, to dictate their conditions to the belligerent countries and to firmly establish themselves in China. Under the flag of neutrality, the American bourgeoisie are encouraging the further inflammation of the European war, becoming in fact an arms factory for Great Britain and France and raking in enormous war profits at the expense of the blood of the peoples of the warring countries. They are aiming to drive their

rivals out of the world markets, to strengthen their imperialist positions and to consolidate their domination on the seas and oceans. Just as hypocritical in character is the neutrality of the other non-belligerent capitalist countries. Their bourgeoisie are doing everything to pile up as big profits as possible out of the war. Therefore even if they stand for peace for their own country, they encourage war between the other states. They use their neutrality as a commodity with which to haggle, endeavouring to sell it to the highest bidder. Many of these neutral states, and above all, Italy, are waiting for the time when, as the war goes on, the chances of victory for one side or the other become clear, so as to take the side of the strong, and to dig their teeth into the vanquished and to tear away their share of the booty. Thus the position both of the belligerent and of the "neutral" states shows with the utmost clarity that *the responsibility for the war lies with the bourgeoisie of capitalist countries and primarily with the ruling circles of the belligerent states.*

## II

Two stages can be clearly discerned in the course of the Second Imperialist War. In the first stage, Italy, Germany and Japan came forward directly as aggressor states. They took the offensive, while the other capitalist states—England, France and the U. S. A.—retreated, in the endeavour to avoid a decisive clash with their rivals and to turn their expansion in another direction, against the Land of Socialism. Now, on the other hand, the imperialists of Britain and France have passed over to the offensive, have hurled their peoples into war against Germany, endeavouring in every way to win a number of other states to their side. Whereas previously the above-mentioned European states were divided into aggressor and non-aggressor powers, i.e. into such as were directly the warmakers, and such as for the time being did not come out openly as aggressors, although behind the scenes, they encouraged aggression against other countries, now this division does not correspond to the real position. This difference has disappeared. What is more, *it is the British and French imperialists who now come forward as the most zealous supporters of the continuation and further incitement of war.*

What has given rise to this change in the position of the chief imperialist rivals a change of very substantial significance from the point of view of understanding the events now taking place ? As is well known, present day Germany grew up on the basis of slogans of revenge against Versailles and of being the shock troops of international reaction against "world bolshevism", against the U.S.S.R.. The national-socialist regime received every kind of support from British and French imperialism, precisely so that it could fulfil its "historic" anti-bolshevik mission. It made wide use of the constant concessions made by Britain and France and taking the law into its own hands, liquidated the Versailles Treaty, created an armed force, laid its hands on Austria, Czechoslovakia and Memel and won certain positions in Spain. *As long as the British and French imperialists hoped to turn Germany's expansion eastwards, they in every way encouraged its aggressive strivings, doing this at the expense of other peoples under the flag of the "non-intervention" policy.* They renounced collective security and transformed the League of Nations—their own creation—into a laughing stock. They also accepted with great satisfaction the conclusion of the much noised "Anti-Comintern" pact between Germany, Italy and Japan and the establishment of the so-called Berlin-Rome-Tokyo "triangle". The culminating point of this policy was the well-known deal at Munich, from whence the heads of the British and French governments returned home as the "saviours of peace", exultant that they had at length succeeded in turning the aggression of Germany against the U.S.S.R.

But by that time the Soviet Union constituted a gigantic force. Rallied around the tested and victorious Party of Lenin and Stalin, the Soviet people, by successfully fulfilling two huge five-year plans, established a powerful Socialist industry, carried through the transfer of small peasant economy to the path of Socialism, and achieved the consolidation of the collective farm system. On this basis, there was guaranteed the indestructible defensive capacity of the land of Socialism, resting on the moral and political unity of its people, on the splendidly equipped Red Army and the most profound Soviet patriotism. By the construction of Socialist society and by its wise Stalinist peace policy, the Soviet Union immeasurably

increased its importance on the international arena and won tremendous confidence and love among the masses of the people of all countries, including Germany itself. Therefore when, in the opinion of the imperialists, a suitable moment had arrived for Germany to fulfil its role as shock troop against the U.S.S.R., Germany could not make up its mind to do so, it had firstly to reckon with the economic and military might of the Soviet Union and with the moral unity and solidarity of the Soviet people, ready to defend their socialist country to the last drop of blood and capable of crushing any enemy; secondly the rulers of Germany were compelled to take account of the fact that they would fail to rally the majority of the German people to a war against the great Land of Socialism. In such a state of affairs, Germany was faced with the dilemma—EITHER to fall into the position of underling of British and French imperialism, to go to war against the Soviet Union and risk its neck in this war; OR, to make a decisive turn in its foreign policy and to take the path of peaceful relations with the Soviet Union. As the facts show, the leaders of Germany selected the second path. At the same time, the ruling circles of Britain and France on their part, while spending months of negotiations with the U.S.S.R. for the alleged purpose of establishing a common front against aggression, were in actual fact using every means possible to prevent this front from being established. Until the very last moment of the negotiations, they did not in the least give up their striving to bring Germany and the Soviet Union into collision. This is also confirmed, by the way, by the “White Paper” published by the British Government itself regarding the negotiations between the British ambassador, Neville Henderson and Hitler on the eve of the German-Polish War. But the British and French imperialist miscalculated. *They staked on an anti-Soviet war but lost.*

The Soviet Union, operating a *Socialist foreign policy*, by concluding a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, frustrated the insidious plans of the provokers of war, ensured peace between the two biggest states in Europe and strengthened its influence over the entire course of international development. *After the conclusion of the German-Soviet Treaty, the bourgeoisie of Britain and France,*



*no longer having any hope of war by Germany against the U. S. S. R., turned to the path of armed struggle against their chief imperialist rival. They did this under the pretext of defending their vassal-reactionary landlord Poland—the very Poland which the British and French imperialists has established as an outpost against the Land of the Soviets and by whose hands they wanted in 1920 to strangle the young Soviet Republic. The very same Poland whose potentates deprived Lithuania of vilna and who not so long ago tore a piece out of the territory of Czechoslovakia. They staked on Poland but here also they lost. The polish state, which constituted a prison of peoples with its regime of reaction and terror, oppression and plunder of millions of Ukrainians, Byelo-Russians and Polish working people themselves, at the very first military blow disclosed all its internal rottenness and fell to pieces in some two weeks.*

*In these conditions, the Soviet Union, pursuing its own independent policy, a policy dictated by the interests of socialism, which coincide with the interests of the working people of all lands, undertook resolute measures to ensure peace throughout the East of Europe. By the entry of the Red Army into West Ukraine and West Byelo-Russia, the Soviet people rendered aid to their brothers groaning under the yoke of the Polish gentry, extricated 13,000,000 working people from sanguinary slaughter, emancipated them from capitalist slavery, opened up before them the road to a happy life and secured them freedom of national and cultural development. By concluding the German-Soviet "Amity and Frontier" Treaty, the U.S.S.R., not only eliminated the immediate danger of war for its peoples but also created a barrier against the extension of the imperialist war. By concluding mutual assistance pacts with the small Baltic countries, which were constantly menaced with falling victim to the big imperialist states, the U.S.S.R. established the guarantee of their national independence and secured their defence against imperialist aggression and strengthened the defensive capacity of its own country. The transfer of the city of Vilna and the Vilna region to Lithuania once again clearly shows the exceptional attention displayed by the Land of socialism towards the national interests of small peoples. There never has been nor is there to-day in the world any state other than the Soviet Union*

that has, of its own accord, ceded a whole region to a small people living on its borders, out of regard for the national interests of this people. At a time when imperialist war is raging in Europe, when the bourgeoisie are inflaming chauvinism, inciting one nation against another, the Soviet Union establishes good neighbourly relations with the surrounding states, being guided in this by the Stalinist policy of peace and friendship of nations. By its entire policy, the U.S.S.R. is rendering an inestimable service to the cause of world peace, in which the peoples of all lands are interested.

*But the imperialists of Great Britain and France, having taken the path of war, do not want to leave it.* On the contrary, they are dragging the peoples further and further onto the fields of battle, covering up in every way the real character of the war. With this end in view, they are setting into motion all the means of the ideological deception of the masses. The older generation of workers who experienced the first world imperialist war well remember how at that time the press of Britain and France sought day in and day out to prove that the governments of these countries were waging war only in "defence of the fatherland" against "Prussian militarism," while the German press in its turn sought to convince people that the war was being waged against "Russian Tsarism". In actual fact, however, as is well known, what was taking place was a struggle between two groups of imperialists for the repartition of the earth. Now the ruling classes of Britain and France who to-day as at that time, are pursuing imperialist aims, have altered the means and slogans of ideological deception in accordance with the situation of to-day. Speculating on the anti-fascist sentiments of the masses, they put forward the slogan of "anti-fascist" war and proclaim that their war against Germany is a "war of democracy against fascism", a war against "Hitlerism," a war for the freedom of nations.

But what fine apostles of "anti-fascist" war these are, who for so many years gave every indulgence to those against whom they are fighting to-day, and disrupted the united front of the peoples' struggle against fascism and war, when the entire international situation advances this struggle as the most important task of the moment. What fine "fighters for the freedom of nations" these are,

who for centuries have kept millions of colonial slaves in bondage and who play with the fate of small nations as bargaining counters in their imperialist deals ! what fine “defenders of democracy” these are who in their own countries are destroying the last remnants of the democratic rights of the popular masses, closing down their newspapers, removing their elected representatives and persecuting all who raise their voice against the present anti-popular war. The French bourgeoisie is now reviving the balckest days of counter-revolutionary terror. Since the days of the sanguinary suppression of the Paris Commune, France has not experienced such a drive of reaction against the working class. The banning of the Communist Party of France, the arrest of the revolutionary representatives of the French proletariat in parliament—the most consistent fighters against reaction of every kind—serves as a clear proof of how false and hypocritical are the declaration regarding the democratic anti-fascist character of the war. *The Reactionary Bourgeoisie hurls itself against the communists because it fears the truth about the war more than fire, because the communist party is the only party that can organise the struggle of the proletariat and all working people against the imperialist war.*

The bourgeoisie is doing everything to compel millions of people to go to war and to die for a cause that is alien to them. *But the proletariat, the working people have nothing to defend in this war. It is not their war, but the war of their exploiters. It brings them suffering, privation, ruin and death. Were they to support such a war, they would merely defend the interests of their enslavers and oppressors, would be supporting capitalist slavery. For the working class there is only one true stand, namely, irreconcilable, courageous struggle against the imperialist war, struggle against the culprits and vehicles of this war ; primarily in their own country, struggle to end this predatory war. This is the justest of causes, one dictated by the fundamental interests of the proletariat and all working people.*

### III

The war that has unfolded between the imperialist countries has radically changed the international situation. *The war is leading*

*to an acute sharpening of all the basic contradictions of the capitalist world.* The longer it goes on, the more does it sharpen the contradictions between the Imperialist states. It is sharpening the contradictions between the metropolitan countries and the colonies, between the dominating and the oppressed nations. And the most important thing is that it is laying bare the class relations in bourgeois society and sharpening to the uttermost limits the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the whole world of the exploited and the handful of exploiters. The war is disclosing all the bankruptcy of the capitalist system and is giving rise to a most acute and profound crisis of capitalism. *The imperialist war is calling forth a regrouping of the class forces in the capitalist countries.* In the camp of the bourgeoisie, the group interests of its different sections are receding before the common class interests of the bourgeoisie. The previously existing division into various opposing groups, into more reactionary and less reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie, is yielding place to their common interest in conducting the war and preserving capitalism. "National Unity" is being established from the extreme reactionary to the extreme "Left" wing of the bourgeoisie, including the top leaders of the petty-bourgeois parties. But at the same time, the other pole is witnessing the beginning of the accelerated departure of the war-ruined masses from the position of support for bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties to the position of struggle against the imperialist war and against the bourgeoisie waging it. Decisive significance in the administration of the state, both in the warring and in the majority of the other capitalist countries, is being assumed by the most bellicose, chauvinistic, most reactionary elements of the financial bourgeoisie. A regime of military dictatorship is in fact being established, although frequently masked by various outward decorations, for the suppression of the indignation of the masses against the war and for the safeguarding of the bourgeois system against possible convulsions. Everywhere in the capitalist world, not only in the warring countries, a furious reactionary drive is taking place against the working class and the toiling masses. *Thus, that which in the period preceding the present war was characteristic of the regime of the fascist countries, is becoming*

*in the conditions of the war let loose increasingly prevalent in the countries of so-called bourgeois democracy.*

*In these changed conditions, the tasks facing the working class also assumes a new character. Whereas formerly the task was to concentrate all forces on the struggle to avert the imperialist war, to curb the warmongers. Now the mobilisation of the widest masses for the struggle against the war already being waged, and to bring it to an end, is the prime task of the moment. Whereas formerly it was a question of barring the road to the onslaught of capital and fascist reaction, now the working class is faced with the task of conducting a most resolute struggle against the regime being established of unbridled terror, oppression and plunder of the popular masses; it is faced with the task of insuring that the ruling classes are prevented from placing the burdens of the war on the backs of the working people, whereas formerly the efforts of the working class were directed primarily to the defence of the daily interests of the working people and to guarding them against the plunder and license of the capitalist exploiters, and it was impossible, by virtue of the absence of the necessary pre-conditions, to place the abolition of capitalist slavery on the order of the day, now, to the extent that the crisis called forth by the war grows deeper, this task will face the working class with overgrowing acuteness. The changed situation and the new tasks of the working class also demand a corresponding change in the tactics of the communist Parties. The united proletarian and peoples' front tactics pursued in recent years made it possible for the proletariat and the labouring masses temporarily to hold up the offensive of capital and imperialist reaction in a number of countries. It helped the Spanish people to conduct an armed struggle for two and a half years against internal reaction and the foreign interventionists. It made it possible for the proletariat of France to secure considerable social gains. The peoples front movement awakened wide masses of people in town and country to activity, and rallied them to the struggle to uphold their own interests against the reactionary cliques. This movement rendered it possible to postpone for a time the outbreak of the European war. The tactics of the united peoples' Front are fully applicable even now in china and also in colonial and dependent countries, the*

*peoples of which are conducting a struggle for their national liberation.*

But these tactics, *in the form*, in which they were conducted prior to the present war, are no longer suitable for other countries. *The necessity of changing the tactics is conditioned by the changes in the situation and the tasks facing the working class and also by the position occupied in connection with the imperialist war by the leading circles of the parties that previously took part in the popular front.* The tactics of the united peoples' front presupposed joint action by the Communist Parties and the Social-Democratic and petty bourgeois "democratic" and "radical" parties against reaction and war. *But the top sections of these parties have now openly passed over to the position of active support for the imperialist war.* The social-Democratic, "democratic" and "radical" flunkeys of the bourgeoisie are brazenly distorting the anti-fascist slogans of the popular front, and are using them to deceive the masses of the people and to cover up the imperialist character of the war. Under the flag of "national Unity", they have in fact established common front with the capitalists, a front stretching from the conservative to labour leaders—in England, and from the Cagoulards to the Socialists—in France. The top leaders of the Social-Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions shamelessly took up front rank posts in the camp of the imperialists from the very first day of the war. As long as the ruling classes of Britain and France had hopes of directing Germany's expansion against the Soviet Union and of utilising the reactionary regime of the German bourgeoisie against the revolutionary working class movement, the social democratic leaders stood for the policy of concession to the desires of Germany. They preached "integral pacifism", fulminated against those who exposed the men of Munich, preached "peace at any price", and proposed the peaceful regulation of questions concerning the distribution of sources of raw materials, spheres of influence and colonies. But when it became clear that German expansion was taking place not in the direction of the soviet Union, but against the spheres of domination and the colonies of Britain and France, and that, on the other hands the Soviet Union had no intention of pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for them, the

“Socialist” pacifists became transformed into the most furious instigators of war. They directed the....poisonous sting of their slander against the Land of Socialism, against the revolutionary workers and the Communist Parties. *THE LEADING CIRCLES OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL ARE FULFILLING THE MOST FILTHY AND CRIMINAL ROLE IN THE BLOOD-DRIPPING SLAUGHTER-MACHINE OF THE WAR.* They are deceiving the masses by their homilies regarding the anti-fascist character of the war and are helping the bourgeoisie to drive the peoples to the slaughter-house. The ruling classes well know that the masses of the people will not believe the British lords, French bankers and their press when they try to convince them of the anti-fascist character of the war, and allege that it is being waged in defence of Poland and in the interests of their own peoples. In the war of 1914-1918 already the bourgeoisie was aware that without the assistance of social democracy, it would be unable to set alight the flames of chauvinism, to deceive the masses with the slogan of “the defence of the fatherland” and to drive them to the field of death for the sake of its imperialist interests. Now it is again placing great hope on social democracy.

The behaviour of the leading circles of the Second International and their social-chauvinistic position in the war also throws a vivid light on the whole of their previous policy, the policy of stubbornly sabotaging unity in the ranks of the working class and its struggle directed towards averting the imperialist war. The Communist International did everything to unite, to rally together the forces of the working class for this end. It addressed to the Second International and the International Federation of Trade Unions a proposal for united action by the international proletariat against the Italian onslaught on Abyssinia. It proposed joint action by all working class organisations to repulse Japanese imperialism when it attacked the Chinese people. On numerous occasions, as everybody knows, it addressed a similar proposal for joint action in defence of the Spanish people. The Communists persistently pointed out at that time that the policy of “non-intervention” was leading to the kindling of a new imperialist war. At the time of “Munich”, the Communists strove to secure the establishment of a real front of the peoples, with the participation of the U.S.S.R., against the

provokers of war. But the social-democratic leaders systematically disrupted all these efforts of the Communists. It now becomes clear to all who do not wish to close their eyes to incontrovertible facts that it is precisely the social-democratic leaders—all these *BLUMS AND PAUL FAURES, CITRINES, ATLESS, GREENWOODS, AND DEBROUCKERES—WHO BEAR THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FACT THAT THEY, BY DISRUPTING THE UNITED ACTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT CAPABLE OF PREVENTING WAR, RENDERED IT POSSIBLE FOR THE BOURGEOISIE TO DOOM MILLIONS OF PEOPLE TO DESTRUCTION FOR THE SAKE OF ITS MERCENARY INTERESTS*

It is Blum and his confederates together with the British and French bourgeoisie who strangled Republican Spain by the policy of “non-intervention”, supported the Munich “peace-makers” for the purpose of war against the Soviet Union and who now are demanding that the working people should go to their death for the restoration of the bankrupt reactionary state of the Polish landlords and capitalists. It is he and his confederates who disrupted the united working class and peoples front in France and opened up the flood-gates to the most furious bourgeois reaction against the working class. It is they, together with Jouhaux, who are now stabbing the French proletariat in the back, by splitting its united trade unions and placing them at the service of the war. It is Blum and his confederates who are now dragging the workers and peasants to shed their blood and die for the maintenance of the colonial domination of the British and French imperialists over the peoples of India, Morocco, Indo-China. It is the Blums, the DeBrouckeres, the British labour leaders, together with the bourgeoisie of France and Britain who are taking up the discredited banner of the “Anti-Comintern” which the German national socialists were compelled by the force of circumstances to give up. It is the social democratic Ministers of a number of countries, who refused to sell arms to the Spanish people for its heroic struggle, and who now, behind the mask of neutrality, are assisting the war contractors in every way in their trade in the weapons of death and are inflaming the Anti-Communist and Anti-Soviet campaign.



It clearly follows from the above that *THE COMMUNISTS CAN HAVE NO UNITED FRONT WHATSOEVER WITH THOSE WHO ARE IN A COMMON FRONT WITH THE IMPERIALISTS AND SUPPORT THE CRIMINAL ANTI-POPULAR WAR*. The working class and all working people have nothing in common with the social-democratic, "democratic" and "radical" politicians who are betraying the vital interests of the popular masses. *BETWEEN THE MASSES OF THE PEOPLE AND THESE LACKEYS OF IMPERIALISM LIES THE ABYSS OF SANGUINARY WAR*. But in the conditions of the war and of the crisis which it has called into being the need for working class unity and for rallying the wide masses of the working people around the working class rises more acutely than formerly. Millions of working people in the capitalist world, and above all in the warring countries, are vitally interested in bringing about militant working class unity and establishing a real popular front against the war let loose by the capitalists, against raging reaction and the unbridled plunder of the masses. And the Communists will not only not cease the struggle for unity of the proletarian ranks and for rallying together the masses of the working people, but will also increase their efforts tenfold in this direction. However, the question now of bringing about working class unity and of creating a united popular front is raised *in a new fashion*. In the period preceding the war, the Communists strove to bring about united working class action by agreements between the Communist and Social-Democratic parties. Now such an agreement is no longer thinkable. *IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, WORKING CLASS UNITY CAN AND MUST BE ACHIEVED FROM BELOW, ON THE BASIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE WORKING MASSES THEMSELVES AND IN A RESOLUTE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE TREACHEROUS LEADERS OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTIES*. And this process will be facilitated to a great degree by the comradely relations that have been established in recent years between the Communists and a considerable section of the social-democratic workers in the joint struggle against reaction and the war-makers. It will also be facilitated by the fact that the social-democratic parties, under the weight of the criminal policy of their leaderships, will increasingly disintegrate, and the healthy proletarian

section of these parties will join with the Communists in taking the path of struggle against the Imperialist War and Capitalism.

In the preceding period the Communists strove to secure the establishment of a united popular front by agreements with the Social-Democratic and other petty-bourgeois "democratic" and "radical" parties in the person of their leading bodies, on the basis of a common platform of struggle against fascism and war. But to the extent that the top leaders of these parties have crossed over wholly and completely into the camp of the imperialists, while certain of them such as the French radicals are directly in charge of the conduct of the war, there can be no question of such agreements. Now the mustering of the working class, of the basic masses of the peasantry, of the urban working folk and of the progressive intelligentsia can and must be brought about *APART FROM AND AGAINST THE LEADERSHIP OF THESE PARTIES, ON THE BASIS OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST WAR AND REACTION IN A UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW. SUCH A FIGHTING UNITED FRONT OF THE MASSES CANNOT BE BROUGHT ABOUT WITHOUT A MOST RESOLUTE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, "DEMOCRATIC" AND "RADICAL" FLUNKYS OF IMPERIALISM, FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THESE AGENTS OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT AND FOR THEIR ISOLATION FROM THE MASSES OF THE WORKING PEOPLE.*

#### IV

History now faces the working class of the capitalist countries with tasks of enormous importance. They have to extricate millions of people from the abyss of war, to save their countries and peoples from ruin, devastation and destruction. Only the working class, taking the lead of the basic masses of the peasantry and the working people of the towns, is in a position resolutely to resist the bourgeoisie and imperialism, to put an end to their sanguinary criminal work and to do away once and for all with the causes giving rise to imperialist wars. These tasks, which face the working class, are quite capable of fulfilment. Now the forces of the international proletariat have grown immeasurably by comparison with the first imperialist war. Its vanguard detachment—the working class of the

U.S.S.R.—has established an impregnable fortress of Socialism. The existence of the Soviet Union multiplies the might of the working class of all the capitalist countries and fortifies their confidence in their own strength. As distinct from the first imperialist war, the trust of the working masses in the bourgeoisie, in capitalism, has already at the beginning of the present war been considerably undermined and will continue increasingly to be undermined. The social democratic leaders will not succeed for long in deceiving the masses, as they were able to do during the first imperialist war. Their treacherous policy, their anti-Communist, anti-Soviet drive is already causing acute discontent in the ranks of the social-democratic parties themselves. As the war goes on, the indignation of the masses will grow and the anti-war movement will become increasingly extensive. The most furious persecution by the bourgeoisie is not in a position to hold up and stifle the struggle of the working people against the imperialist war.

The historic role of the Communist vanguard of the working class is at the present moment to organise and take the lead of this struggle. If the Communists are to be able successfully to fulfil this role of theirs, they must show as example of the correct understanding of the essence of the present war and utterly smash the legend regarding its alleged anti-fascist, just character, so assiduously spread about by the social democratic leaders. *EXPLAIN, EXPLAIN AND ONCE AGAIN EXPLAIN THE REAL STATE OF AFFAIRS TO THE MASSES*—this above all at the present moment is the most important condition for the mobilisation of the masses for the struggle against the imperialist war and capitalist reaction. The unfolding of a really wide movement against the imperialist war and reaction can only be successful if the Communists act and conduct the struggle in the very midst of the masses, keep a sharp watch as to their state of mind, take careful heed of their voice, and take their needs and sufferings to heart. The Communists must not run ahead. They must put forward slogans that correspond to the concrete situation, slogans that can be understood and grasped by the masses, must always take the lead of the movement of the masses and lead them on to the solution of the maturing new tasks. *THE PRESENT EXCEPTIONALLY SERIOUS SITUATION DEMANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS*

**THAT THEY DO NOT GIVE AWAY AT ALL TO REPRESSION AND PERSECUTION, BUT COME FORWARD RESOLUTELY AND COURAGEOUSLY AGAINST THE WAR, AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY, THAT THEY ACT IN THE WAY LENIN TAUGHT, IN THE WAY TAUGHT NOW BY THE GREAT, WISE LEADER OF THE WORKING PEOPLE, COMRADE STALIN.** The Communist Parties must rapidly reorganise their ranks in accordance with the conditions of the war, purge their ranks of rotten, capitulatory elements, and establish iron Bolshevik discipline. They must concentrate the fire against opportunism, expressed in slipping into the position of "defending the fatherland", in support of the fairy tale about the anti-fascist character of the war, and in retreat before the acts of the bourgeoisie. And the sooner the Communist Parties achieve all this, the better will they be able to carry through their independent leading role in the working class movement and the more successfully can they fulfil the tasks now facing them.

As the war goes on, all the Communist Parties, all working class organisations, all active workers are put to the supreme test. Individual weak elements, faint hearts, will drop away at sharp turns. Elements alien to the working class, careerists, renegades, who have tacked themselves on to the Communist Party will be thrown overboard. The Communist Parties will as a whole, undoubtedly stand the test. They will become still better steeled in the coming battles. New hundreds of thousands of fighters for the working class cause will fill the ranks of the army of Communism. **THE COMMUNIST PARTIES AND THE WORKING CLASS OF THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES WILL BE INSPIRED BY THE HEROIC EXAMPLE OF THE RUSSIAN BOLSHEVIKS, BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE PARTY OF LENIN AND STALIN, WHICH IN 1914-1918 SHOWED THE PROLETARIAT THE TRUE WAY OUT OF THE WAR AND SUBSEQUENTLY SECURED THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM OVER ONE-SIXTH OF THE GLOBE.** By holding aloft the banner of the proletarian internationalism, and strengthening the bonds of fraternal solidarity between the working class of all countries the Communists will thereby help all working people to fulfil their historic mission. **THE IMPERIALISTS OF THE WARRING COUNTRIES HAVE BEGUN THE WAR FOR A NEW PARTITION OF THE EARTH, FOR WORLD DOMINATION, DOOMING MILLIONS OF PEOPLES**

**TO DESTRUCTION. THE WORKING CLASS IS CALLED UPON TO PUT AN  
END TO THE WAR AFTER ITS OWN FASHION, IN ITS OWN INTERESTS  
IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WHOLE OF LABOURING MANKIND AND  
THEREBY TO DESTROY ONCE AND FOR ALL THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES  
GIVING RISE TO IMPERIALIST WARS.**

## INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS— RAMGARH RESOLUTION

This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed and the action taken on the war situation by the A.I.C.C. and Working Committee. The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India's resources in this War, as an affront to them, which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the War fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the War, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The congress therefore strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the War. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congress men, and those under the Congress influence cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and dominion status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great

nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly. Where the rights of all recognised minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. India's constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress repudiates attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood. The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities for development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order.

The Congress cannot admit the right of the Rulers of Indian States, or of foreign vested interests to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the States or the Provinces, and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the States is of British creation and it will not be satisfactorily solved unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. Foreign interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people, will be protected.

The Congress withdrew the Ministries from the Provinces where the Congress had a majority in order to dissociate India from the War and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination. This preliminary step must naturally be followed by Civil Disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organisation is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis. The Congress desires to draw the attention

of Congressmen to Gandhi's declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring civil disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the constructive programme prescribed in the Independence Pledge.

The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and the struggle for Indian independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence the Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of Civil Disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

The Congress hereby authorises the All-India Congress Committee and, in the event of this being necessary, the Working Committee to take all steps to implement the foregoing resolution, as the Committee concerned may deem necessary.



# EUROPE AGAINST HITLER

Rajani Palme Dutt

## A NOTE ON THE BOOK

*We make no apology for presenting to our Indian readers this booklet, Europe Against Hitler by R. Palme Dutt, with a leading article from the New Masses of U. S. A.*

*Very often people have asked us why we were interested in Soviet victory and why we thought the war on the Soviet Union to be fundamentally different from the war that Hitler-fascism waged against other states like Poland, Holland, Norway, France, etc. We answered the question for the Bengali and Hindi reading public in our Pamphlets No 3. ( in Bengali ) and No 4. ( in Hindi ). But a larger public requires still to be enlightened. To them we present this booklet.*

*R. Palme Dutt calls for no introduction to Indian readers. For, he is well known as a leading Marxist intellectual in the English-speaking world. For over two decades he has been recognised in England and America as perhaps the best exponent of Marxism in theory and practice. We in India have a special reason to feel proud of the fact. Rajani Palme Dutt ( Editor, Labour Monthly, the organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain ) as also his brilliant brother Clemen Dutt owe of course their education and upbringing to Britain. India however has a claim on them as literally their fatherland. R. P. D. as he is affectionately called, belongs to the well known Rambagan Dutt family of Calcutta. And though Palme Dutt could never be in this land he has never failed to serve the Indian cause with all his scholarship and ardour. Many must have seen his 'Modern India' published in 1927. Yet perhaps, few of us could form any acquaintance with his latest and best analysis India To-day, dedicated with affectionate regards to his father the late Woopendra Nath Dutt.*

*India To-day, like his classic studies of World Politics and Fascism & Social Revolution, is a monumental work. It is banned in India under the Sea Customs Act. But Rajani Palme Dutt has re-established with the work—and inspite of the ban—his natural tie with us, and linked us again through himself and his illuminating study with the peoples of the world on march in every land.*

## EUROPE AGAINST HITLER

The Nazi War on the Soviet Union and the British-Soviet Pact of Alliance against Hitlerite Germany have opened a new world situation. We have now entered into the most urgent conflict of our time, in which the fate of the British people and of every people in the world, and the whole future of mankind, are brought on to the battlefield. For the people of this country, for all the peoples of Europe, the greatest and most formidable issues and dangers, but also the greatest hopes, if they fight now in unity with all their strength, are opening out.

The assault of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union brings to a head all those burning issues of our epoch which came to the forefront with the accession of Fascism to power in Germany, now eight years ago. With the war on the Soviet Union Fascism has entered on its supreme gamble. By this attack every people in the world is menaced. Defeat in this war means the certain doom of Fascism. All previous wars, whether reactionary or progressive, even those that have been most crucial for human development, pale into insignificance, not only in scale and intensity, but above all in the magnitude of the issues involved for the whole future of mankind, beside this titanic conflict of the old and the new, between the most colossal military power of reaction ever built up for the enslavement of the world, and the mighty power of the free Soviet people, the representative of the future of humanity, now acting in alliance with the British people, and leading all the peoples of Europe and the world in the struggle for freedom against Fascist enslavement or against the threat of Fascist enslavement. Here in this concrete form, in the battle for the national freedom of the peoples against Fascist enslavement, is expressed today at this turning point of history the conflict for the future of the world. All

issues today relate themselves to this basic conflict. With the most sweeping survey and realist appraisal of the new alignment of forces, with the fullest consciousness of all that is at stake, it is necessary to draw with a bold and firm hand the new perspective, in order to reach speedily and plainly the practical conclusions and urgent tasks which now fall before the peoples of all countries and especially the people of this country.

### **The British-Soviet Pact**

The British-Soviet Pact of July 12, with the plainly defined pledge of mutual aid and no separate peace in the Joint war for the defeat of Hitlerite Germany, confirms and strengthens the new alignment of forces. The shift in the balance of world relations carries with it the most far-reaching consequences. At last that alliance of the British and Soviet peoples, leading the peoples of Europe in the struggle for liberation against Fascist aggression and enslavement; that alliance for which the working class and democratic movement in this country, in unity with the Soviet people, strove so many years in vain against the conspirators of world reaction ; that alliance which could have prevented the present war ; that alliance has now been established even at the thirteenth hour in the midst of war.

At last German Fascism, after eight years of victorious advance, made possible mainly by the corrupt assistance of the upper class conspirators in the other countries meets now a combined front of the peoples. At last German Fascism, after enslaving all the other nations of the European Continent, meets the mighty power of a free people who face it ready and prepared with equal strength ; who fight with the knowledge that they fight for no imperialist aims, but for the cause of their own freedom and the freedom of all peoples, including the German people, enslaved by Fascism ; and who thereby make those aims the common aims of all these peoples engaged in the just war for the defeat of German Fascism.

### **Munich Avenged**

Munich has been avenged, even in the hour of its seeming victory. The conspirators of Munich built up the military power of German Fascism, and shattered the bastions of peace, in the hope

to turn that military power against the Soviet Union. Thereby they let loose a different war.

Thanks to their handiwork, which led first to the destruction of the liberties of the other European nations, and then to the most dire peril of the British people, the long planned criminal offensive of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union has at length been let loose. The Soviet people, who could have led the world in peace, while holding Fascism in check, had their policy been followed, have now, because of the refusal of their policy, to face the bloodiest ordeal. In place of the bloodless victories of the Peace Front, they have now the grimmer task to show the world how to fight and defeat Fascism, that monster begotten of capitalist reaction of the intrigue, which the social and political corruption of the ruling structure in all the capitalist countries first unchained and allowed to ravage the world, and then proved incapable to master.

In unity with the peoples of all countries, they and we together will accomplish this task. But this climax towards which the entire policy of the Munichites was directed, and for the sake of which they were prepared to sacrifice the interests of their peoples, has come about under very different conditions from their original dream. The launching of the offensive of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, which should have represented the highest point of victory of the whole programme the sponsors of the Munich intended to achieve, has instead led to the victory of the very programme they intended to destroy. The launching of the offensive of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, in place of being followed by the Munichite dream of the united front of world reaction, has been followed by the British-Soviet Pact of Mutual Aid and the growing unity of the British, American, Soviet and Chinese peoples in the common cause of national freedom and defence against aggression. This is the positive achievement which shows the path of hope and confidence in the present grave hour. We have still to be prepared to go through heavy trials. We have to be prepared for new sharp turns in the present complex situation. But the path is step by step opening out, across all obstacles, for the common victory of the peoples. The logic of history is defeating and will defeat the logic of counter-revolution.

## **Twists and Turns of World History**

World history always works itself out with a greater richness and complexity; with more twists and turns than even the most powerful political insight, the insight of the great masters of Marxism, could attempt to plot out beforehand in detail. In the hour of Munich, when such critical alternatives opened out before the world, none could have attempted to lay down with certainty beforehand the precise concrete form in which those alternatives would finally work themselves out. At that turning point the immediate visible alternatives proclaimed themselves in three main forms. Either the victory at the eleventh hour of the Peace Front and the checking of Fascism. Or the victory of the policy of Munich and the launching of combined counter revolutionary war against the Soviet Union. Or the third alternative, against which the Marxist supporters of the Peace Front gave the most explicit warning, that the refusal of the Peace Front by the Western Powers would give rise, not to the intended war of the combined counter-revolutionary front against the Soviet Union, but to the Nazi offensive to the West and the consequent outbreak of imperialist war in Western and Central Europe. These were in fact the immediate alternatives between which the event revealed the final choice, consequent on the strength of the Soviet Union and the weakness of the popular democratic forces in the West. But who at that time could have ventured to foretell that, when the refusal of the Peace Front had in fact within less than one year of the outbreak of imperialist war in Western and Central Europe, the very development and consequences of that imperialist war should give rise to a situation in which, at the moment of the launching of the Nazi offensive against the Soviet Union, the alternative common front against Fascism should at least be formed in the midst of war ? Such has been the final working out to-date of the alternatives which opened at Munich.

Sharp turns and changes are increasingly characteristic of the modern international situation. They are a symptom of the extreme instability and break-up of the old order, and especially of the complications resulting from the parallel development of the imperialist antagonisms for the re-division of the world alongside

the existence and growing strength of the new type of state which is outside the system of imperialism and represents the interests of advancing humanity and the future world order. The problems confronting the ruling classes in all countries are daily more acute. In the present world situation, with the growing social and political stress within the old States and Empires, there can be no stability. Ceaseless sharp turns of policy must inevitably be expected, as the leaders of imperialism strive to cleave out a way from their dilemmas, now in this direction, now in that. In the broadest historical sense the avenues of escape are narrowing for world imperialism. For over quarter of a century, through the first world war, through Versailles, through the world economic crises, through, Fascism, through Munich, through the second world war, imperialism has been drawing the noose tighter around its neck, and, with each twist and turn to extricate itself, adds a new knot.

### **Responsibilities of Leadership**

The forces on our side, the forces of awakening humanity, are growing in strength, are gathering and advancing to that unity which will ensure victory. But in terms of immediate power, of States, of resources, of armies, of technique, of organisation, the balance is still overwhelmingly on the side of imperialism. Therefore the whole present period requires, more than ever before in the history of the working class movement the utmost skill of leadership, tactical speed, elasticity, boldness of initiative and ability to manoeuvre, in order to meet each turn and new situation with a corresponding policy, to prevent any decisive unfavourable combination of forces, and to secure at each point the most favourable combination of forces at the given moment from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and the future of human liberation.

### **The Parrot Cry of "Somersaults"**

Only the most superficial and naive spectators are capable of seeing in these sharp changes of the world situation and the policy of the ruling classes, and the consequent sharp changes which the policy of the working class must carry through in order to meet each new objective situation, not the demonstration of the instability of imperialist relations and of the correctness of the policy of

Marxism, but the triumphant proof in their eyes of the instability of Marxism. The old parrot cry of “somersaults” is still heard from a few irresponsible critics against the Communist party. It appears that the Communist Party is accused of “somersaults” because it meets changes in the objective situation with corresponding changes in its policy. A party which failed to do this would not be a Marxist Party. This is so elementary that it is Painful to need to waste any space in pointing it out.

The accusation is as old as Marxism (e. g. the controversy over Marx's reversal of attitude in relation to the successive stages of the Franco-German war of 1870-71) the Bolsheviks at one time denounced a pact with the Liberal Cadets and at another time made such a pact. In the summer of 1917 they demanded the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and in the beginning of 1918 dispersed it by force. In the autumn of 1917 they denounced Rodzianko's intrigues for a peace with the Kaiser, and in the spring of 1918 they signed a peace with the Kaiser. Every one of these turns raised a howl from their Liberal critics all over the world against their “inconsistency” and “unprincipled opportunism.” History has proved their correctness.

### **Then and Now**

It is obvious to every observer that the present international situation is exceptionally full of extremely sharp turns, corresponding to the extreme disorganisation of all capitalist relations, which are by no means finished. Only a little over a year ago the British and French Government were actively promoting interventionist war against the Soviet Union; they were despatching planes and guns to Fascist Finland for use against the Soviet Union; they had prepared expeditionary forces to send, and would have sent them had not the collapse of the Mannerheim line defeated their plans. Germany was at this time maintaining formal friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

Today the German rulers are leading the most violent aggressive war in history against the Soviet Union. The British Government has signed a Pact of Mutual Aid and alliance with the Soviet Union. Is not this a basic change in the international situation and the

relations of the powers ? Is it not obvious that the policy of an intelligent party must changes with these changes in the situation, if it is to be really cosistent ? To demand the same policy in two exactly opposite situations would be the real inconsistency. These myopic critics see the fly and miss the elephant; they see the switch in the policy of the Communist Party, and ignore the switch in the international situation which has called it forth. They would accuse the thermometer of being inconsistent because it registers heat in summer and cold in winter.

A little over a year ago the official government apologia, *The British Case*, written by Lord Lloyd with a preface by Lord Halifax, accused Hitler of the "supreme betrayal" because he had signed a Pact of Non Aggression with the Soviet Union. Today Hitler is accusing the British Government of the "supreme betrayal" because it has signed a Pact of Mutual Aid and Alliance with the Soviet Union. Is it not clear that there is a complete reversal in the relations of forces ?

A little over a year ago Mannerheim and Tanner were held up as the darlings of Western Democracy and the Second International, and the Soviet strategic action for the protection of Leningrad was denounced as blood stained aggression. Today these 'heroes' are seen in their true colours, and the justice of the Soviet action is more widely understood. At that time Stalin was denounced by the British Labour Party, in its pamphlet on Finland, as "the Red Czar...the executor of the traditional imperialism of Czarist Russia...an alien and powerful despot gangster...the real depth of the iniquity of M. Joseph Stalin is still unknown." Today *The Daily Herald* (organ of the Labour Party) declares (July 5) "Three great figures lead mankind in the struggle to defend human freedom : Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt." No one in his senses would dream in this moment of supreme crisis and common struggle to launch an attack against the Labour Party on the basis of this change of estimation, or seek to waste time accusing the Labour Party of "somersaults" [The only sensible question at the present moment is, not whether there has been a change in policy to meet a change in the situation, but : Is the estimate of the situation correct ? Is the policy put forward to meet is correct and adequate ?]



## **The First Phase, 1931-'39**

The war crises, which has continuously developed and extended, through a long period of incubation, during the past decade out of the consequences of the world economic crisis, and has now advanced, with the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, to its highest climax, has passed through three main phases of development, each with its distinctive characteristics, and each with its consequent necessary policy for the working class and for the peoples involved.

The first phase of preparation, during which the world passed imperceptibly, without a sharp distinguishing margin, from peace into war, through a series of extending localised conflicts, into what became in fact by its later stages already possible to be characterised as the second imperialist war, developed from the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in the autumn of 1931 to the Anglo-French declaration of war on Germany in the autumn of 1939. During this phase the initiative was in the hands of the challenging groups of Fascist Powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—who, linked together in what eventually took the form of the Anti-Comintern Pact, carried forward their aggressive offensive for the new division of the world at the expense of the non-Fascist imperialist Powers in possession—Britain, France and the United States. These Powers, however, in place of opposing this offensive, assisted and encouraged it, and in every way built up the strength of Fascism, conniving at every illegality and aggression, handing it new victims, breaking down the limitations of Versailles and shattering the peace system constructed from the last war, because they hoped to see the offensive of Fascism eventually turned against the Soviet Union. This was the policy which reached its height at Munich and its final fiasco with the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact.

## **The Fight For The Peace Front**

During this phase the task of the working class and democratic movement was to build up the strongest common front, both within each country, and, internationally, on the basis of a coalition of States with the Soviet Union for the defence of peace against aggression—or peace Front to check the offensive of Fascism and

war, prevent its advance to general war and thus win time for the working class and popular forces in all countries to carry forward their struggle, in conditions of peace, to solve the basic social problems at the root of the crisis, which would otherwise inevitably sooner or later give rise to imperialist war.

Great struggles were carried forward along this line in unity with the Chinese, Abyssinian and Spanish peoples through the People's Front in France and the Franco-Soviet Pact, for the People's Front in Britain and the Anglo-Soviet Pact. The Soviet Union conducted through these years a diplomatic campaign whose initiative and statesmanship won universal admiration, at the same time as they were able to give material help to the Chinese people and to the Spanish people struggling for freedom. Today it is recognised on all sides that, had this common front, for which the Soviet Union and the militant workers in all countries, together with wide sections of the progressive forces, fought during these critical years, been established in time, the war which broke out in 1939 need never have taken place; or, if it had none the less broken out, would have broken out under the most favourable condition for the rapid success of the struggle of the peoples.

The reactionary ruling class forces in the West, however, represented by Chamberlain, were too strong and were able at that time to prevent this common front being formed. The working class and democratic movement was not strong enough or united enough, or able to find the necessary policy and leadership, or to establish common ground with the opposition minority in the ruling class, to be capable of defeating the dominant Munichite policy and the rule of Chamberlain. Munich laid bare the reactionary plans for the Four Power Front against the Soviet Union. The complicated moves and counter moves of the spring and summer of 1939 did not change the basic situation. Despite Lloyd George's warning, the ill-judged guarantees to Poland and Rumania were adopted without effective backing and without an understanding with the Soviet Union.

As late as May 1939, the Soviet proposal for an Anglo-French-Soviet Pact of Mutual Guarantee was explicitly rejected on principle, on the grounds that it would divide Europe into two camps. On

the very edge of the outbreak of war in Europe the Soviet military proposals for the combined defence of Poland were rejected. The Soviet Union, after waiting to the extreme edge of danger to give time for the alternative forces in the West to assert themselves, acted decisively and defeated the counter-revolutionary plans of the Chamberlains and the Daladiers by the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, which succeeded in restricting the sphere of the imperialist war, now made inevitable through the refusal of the Peace Front, and won time for the Soviet Union to prepare and to strengthen its strategic position.

The Munichites replied by declaring war on Nazi Germany, as soon as it had signed the Pact of Non-Aggression with the Soviet Union and thus made clear that its offensive would be directed against their imperialist interests. The second phase of the war, the war of the Western European imperialist power began.

### **The Second Phase, 1939-'41**

The second phase of the war, which opened in September 1939 and extended to June 1941, bore the character of full imperialist war, even though one camp was the camp of Fascist Germany. This imperialist character of the war followed, not from the sentiments of the people in Britain and France, who were sincerely opposed to Fascism, and prepared to struggle for their national independence and the independence of the European nations against the hated Nazi system, but from the very different aims and policy of the ruling classes, which held the power and whose aims governed the character of the war.

The dominant pro-Fascist imperialists in Britain and France who entered on the war of autumn of 1939 still stood for the same basic reactionary aims which they had pursued through Munich. They saw the war, not as war against Fascism, but as war for their imperialist interests against a rival imperialism, and the prelude to an anti-Soviet war. For them the "Supreme betrayal" of Nazism was not its war on democracy, but its peace with the Socialist Soviet State. Even while all was quiet on the Western Front, they were actively promoting interventionist war against the Soviet Union. Their official press in the early months openly discussed the possibilities of "switching" the war. For this purpose they advocated

a "revolution of the right" in Germany. Neglecting all serious preparation or intensive rearmament measures during those critical early months, they despatched the planes and guns, soon to be sorely needed in the West, to Fascist Finland for use against the Soviet Union, which was engaged in the most urgent military operations in preparation for the future conflict with Nazi Germany. Such was the character of the first stage of the war of 1939, of the "frozen war", during which the ruling classes of the Western powers, especially in France, directed their main fire, not against the foreign enemy, but against the class enemy at home, against democracy, the Communists and working class organisations, and against the Soviet Union.

### **From Chamberlain To Churchill**

At the disastrous consequences of this policy made themselves felt in the spring and summer of 1940, with the headlong Nazi advance and the enslavement of the nations of Western and Central Europe, a shift in the balance of relations within the ruling class followed. In France the Munichites and the most open supporters of Fascism carried their policy to its consistent conclusion, threw open the front, disorganised the rear and directly betrayed their country to the foreign enemy in order to maintain their class privileges, even as subordinate agents of a foreign power.

In Britain the Munichite politicians were heavily discredited but remained strongly entrenched in positions of power. Direct governmental leadership passed into the hands of the alternative section of the ruling class represented by Churchill, which had consistently stood for an active policy of opposition to Hitler, and which now opposed the tendencies of capitulation on the lines of France. The aims of this section, while opposed to the policies of capitulation to Hitler, were still aims of another imperialist war against a rival imperialism, and not of a People's War against Fascism. They saw the war as a continuation of the war of 1914; their spokesmen, as in the notorious Vansittart pamphlet, insisted that the war was directed, not only against the Nazi rulers, but against the German people; they proclaimed the aim of a super Versailles which should impose upon the German people for generations even more onerous terms than the Versailles Treaty,

whose imposition had sown the seeds for Hitler. Their strategy for victory was based on the alliance with American imperialism, while reactionary influences continuously obstructed every attempt to establish closer relations with the Soviet Union. This policy led to the isolation of the British people from the dynamic forces of European peoples struggling against Fascism and from the Soviet Union, while involving them in increasingly heavy subordination, in consequence of this isolation, to American finance-capital. It held out the prospect of prolonged, extending and destructive imperialist war, developing over many years and reaching to an imperialist treaty which would sow the seeds of new wars. Thus, while the interests of the British people were unalterably opposed to capitulation to Hitler and to the criminal counter-revolutionary policies to the pro-Hitler capitulators in the ruling class, the interests and aims of the alternative section of the ruling class did not correspond to the interests and aims of the people.

The problem remained for the people to achieve a policy and leadership which should express their interests, defend them against Fascism at home and abroad and lead the way to a peace on the basis of the freedom of the peoples.

### **Tasks in the Changed Situation**

The tasks of the working class and democratic movement during this period, in the second phase of the war, consequent on the refusal of the Peace Front, corresponded to these new conditions. The basic task remained to build up the common front of the peoples, in unity with the Soviet Union, for the defence of their interests against Fascism and reaction, for the real democratic anti-Fascist struggle and for the achievement of a durable peace which should be based on the freedom of the peoples. But the failure of the fight for the Peace Front and for the replacement of Chamberlain ; and the consequent character of the war thereby launched, basically changed the conditions of the fight in the new phase. There could be no question of applying the conceptions of the Peace Front to the very different war which had arisen through its refusal; of trailing behind the reactionary imperialist and anti-Soviet aims which were thinly concealed behind a show of anti-Fascist slogans; of assisting the destruction of democracy and working class rights,

as in France, which paved the way for the victory of Nazism and home Fascism, or supporting the military measures against the Soviet Union which, as the outcome has shown, were an objective help to Nazi Germany. It was necessary to strike out an independent line, even initially against the stream, in order to make possible the conditions for a real common front of the peoples, in unity with the Soviet people, for the protection of their interests and the victory of their aims.

### **Communist Policy in the Second Phase**

In accordance with these tasks, the Communists and militant popular forces, in the first stage of the new phase of the war which opened in September 1939, during the "frozen war" while the war was still formal and before actual warfare had begun in Western Europe, strove for immediate peace, on the basis of the proposals put out in the Soviet-German declaration of September 28 for the opening of negotiations, as the best means for saving the peoples of Western Europe from being involved in war, before the irreparable had taken place, and thus winning back the possibility for building the effective common front of the peoples for the prevention of war.

The possibility finally disappeared with the extension of the war in Northern and Western Europe in the spring of 1940. The most dangerous situation now confronted the British people in consequence of the disastrous preceding policy. The British people were now facing in isolation the power of German Fascism extending over all Western and Central Europe—the very situation against which the communists had for many years given warning as the inevitable final outcome of the Chamberlain policy. The paramount question now became how to save the people in the face of this menacing situation.

### **The Peoples's Programme**

It was necessary to combat and defeat the policies of capitulation advocated by that section of the ruling class which sought to emulate the example of Vichy without allowing the struggle of the British people for their national independence to be sacrificed for reactionary imperialist aims which were contrary to the interests of the struggle. From May 1940, the Communists put forward their

concrete programme in this situation how to save and defend the people. Against the policies of both sections of the ruling class, they put forward the proposals for a Peoples Government which should organise the democratic defence of the people against Fascism, at home or abroad; establish the closest unity with the Soviet Union and the peoples of Europe struggling against Fascist domination. put forward its proposals for a peace based on the freedom of the peoples; and, in the event of those proposals being refused, carry forward the struggle no longer for imperialist aims, but for the aims of the liberation of the peoples. The victory of a People's Government in Britain, even if it had not been followed by an immediate corresponding victory of the popular forces in Germany, and even if it had in consequence been necessary for a period to continue the war, would have thus meant the transformation of the imperialist war into a real **people's war** against Fascism, conducted in closest association with the Soviet Union. This is in fact the transformation which has now taken place along another route, not by the changes of Government in Britain (for this popular forces were not yet strong enough), but by the new situation resulting from the participation of the Soviet Union in the war and the consequent change in the character of the major forces now participating in and governing the character of the war.

### **Vindication of Soviet Policy in the Second Phase**

The vindication of the role of the Soviet Union during these two critical years is now becoming clear even to the blindest. Had the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union taken place two years ago, in 1939, with Chamberlain and Daladier in power in Britain and France, it is easy to see with what speed the united counter-revolutionary front would have been formed against the Soviet Union. The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact smashed these plans, and won for the Soviet Union two years for the most intensive preparation. It won time for the peoples in Western Europe to begin to rally their forces, and for a situation to be reached in which the united Munichite Front could no longer be formed. It gave time for the Soviet Union to take the most active and boldest strategic measures to strengthen its entire Western frontier. Every one of these measures was at the time abused and denounced by pigmy

critics, who remained, not only indifferent to the interests of the liberated peoples in the territories concerned, but blind to the plain strategic significance of the steps taken in relation to the future struggle against German Fascism. Today these critics may well give thanks on their knees that these steps were taken.

There are still some lingering voices which seek to refer to these two years of the most brilliant and audacious policy of the Soviet Union as “appeasement”. Their guilty consciences over their own past lead them to seek to turn the plain facts upside down. The essence of the policy of appeasement is the successive surrender of interests, territories or peoples in the vain hope of evading or postponing a future conflict, with the final outcome of emerging weakened to face the conflict. The record of the Soviet Union during these two years was the exact opposite. Western Ukraine and Byelo Russia ; Finland and the protection of Leningrad; the Baltic States and Bessarabia. Every step was a strengthening of the position of the Soviet Union, an extension of its territory, a winning of new peoples to the Union, a thrusting forward of its frontier, a delay to the aggressor. It is only necessary to refer to Hitler's tirade endeavouring to justify his treacherous attack on the Soviet Union to note the continual refrain : “I gave way with a heavy heart...I had to be silent...I advised acquiescence in the Russian demands...this fresh Russian demand.....continually renewed extortions.....I remained silent because I was forced to do so” etc. A curious form of “appeasement” on the part of the Soviet Union !

These two years of courageous, realist and farsighted policy of the Soviet Union prepared the way, not only to save the Soviet Union, but to save the peoples of the entire world, by helping to build up that strategic strength and readiness in the West which is today meeting the shock of the entire Nazi military machine, showing for the first time how to stand up to that assault, winning thereby the hope and the possibility of action for every other people, and constituting the principal—in bitter truth, at present, the only—military barrier between the Nazi dreams of world conquest and the peoples of the world. By their actions during these two years the Soviet people assailed by thoughtless critics, were in fact



performing as signal a service to the world as any in all their proud history

### **The Turning Point of the War**

By the spring of this year it was clear that the decisive turning point of the war and of the whole development of the modern period was approaching. The war in Europe had reached a temporary deadlock. It was evident that the imperialist war could only go forward as world imperialist war between the Anglo-American coalition and Nazi Germany dominating Europe. But before the imperialists could embark with confidence on such a hazardous enterprise, they were faced with the problem of the independent power of the Soviet Union. As at every sharp turning point of the modern period, the question of the Soviet Union and of relations with the Soviet Union dominated the world situation. It was evident that a heavy and evenly balanced world imperialist conflict of the type contemplated would be likely to prove a protracted war, extending with a widening destructive sweep over a series of years, and leading to incalculable consequences for the whole existing social structure.

Already the movement of the peoples was beginning to rise in all countries. Especially, the national movements of revolt were growing in Europe against the hated Nazi domination. The Nazi rulers were the most sharply conscious of the crucial problems with which they were faced. They could least afford to wait. Their military machine was mobilised at its highest point. They must go forward in extending aggression or go down. They were directly faced with the rising national movements of revolt in Europe. They were acutely conscious, of the contiguity of the Soviet Union on their borders, with its socialist peace policy and the advancing prosperity of its people contrasting with the situation of their own war-racked and enslaved people and embittered subject nations.

It was from the Nazi ruling Circles that the emissary went forth to the opposite ruling camp to try out the possibility of common ground for action against the Soviet Union. There were currents of thought in both camps which sought the possibility of resolving the conflict on the basis of turning the war against the Soviet Union. But in fact the antagonism of imperialism over the new division

of the world, with the forces now fully set in motion on both sides and the final trial of strength still unresolved, was too deep to permit of any such easy solution.

### **The Lull Before the Storm**

The most critical point in modern imperialist development and in the life of the peoples was approaching. From April the Communists gave warning to be prepared for the most sharp and sudden turns in the international situation. On May 6 Stalin took over the direct leadership of the Soviet Government—a change which bore the clearest signal not only to the Soviet people, but to the international working class and the peoples of all countries to recognise the seriousness of the situation and be prepared.

Where would the blow fall ? What form would it take ? Nazi Germany during these critical weeks was publicly concentrating its armed forces on the borders of the Soviet Union. Would Nazi Germany strike without prior agreement with Britain and the United States ? This became the crucial question of the international situation. To this question the voyage of exploration of Hess sought to provide the grounds for an answer. He was the physical embodiment of that old diplomatic term, a *ballon d'essai*. It was on May 10 that Hess landed in Britain to explore the possibilities of collaboration with reactionary ruling circles for the purpose of the proposed attack on the Soviet Union. While the reception of Hess showed that there undoubtedly existed influential reactionary elements prepared to consider such proposals, it also showed that, so far as the Government was concerned, the proposals fell on stony ground. Why Churchill and the authorities deliberately chose to maintain mysterious silence over Hess, when in fact the proposals had been turned down, remains officially unexplained. Was this silence, with its suggestion of some possible complicity, a trap to lure Hitler forward on his desperate enterprise with the hope of some possible eventual support, only to turn on him with the most positive counter-thrust so soon as he had embarked on it ? Had some bright wit of British diplomacy devised the scheme to use Hess as a boomerang and to catch Hitler with his own anti-Soviet bait with which he had so often in the past gulled the British ruling class ? Only future records will reveal the details of this episode.

What is important for present purposes is that the voyage of exploration of Hess revealed that in fact the basis was lacking for such an agreement. Acceptance of the proposals of Hess, in the existing weakened situation of Britain, would have been equivalent to acceptance of Nazi world hegemony by Britain. There was no road here. The deadlock continued. Only decisive action, in one direction or another, could break it.

**June 22, 1941**

On June 22 Hitler struck. Hitler gave the orders for "the greatest march in history" against the Soviet Union. In the midst of the war which he had not yet won Hitler took on new enemy, the greatest military power which was alone capable of standing up to his own. Hitler delivered his treacherous attack on the Soviet Union, not only without a declaration of war, but without the pretence of raising first any issue of disagreement. This meant that the entire calculation was based on the lightning thrust. Hitler struck without any prior agreement with Britain and the United States. Hitler struck against the Soviet Union, while the war against the Anglo-American coalition was still on his hands. This meant that Hitler deliberately took on the possibility of the war on two fronts, against which he had previously made the main political and strategic lesson from the last war and from all German history to avoid, and which only two years before he had directed all his efforts to prevent. What considerations drove the Nazi rulers to carry through this reversal of their preceding policy and embark on the enterprise which inevitably placed in the scales the future existence of their regime ?

### **Why Hitler Struck?**

A series of considerations may be judged to have impelled the Nazi rulers to this fateful decision.

First, strategic. Nazi Germany could not afford to wait and to see the gradual amassing of the strength and mobilisation of the superior potential resources of the Anglo-American coalition, while the power of the Soviet Union remained unbroken in its rear. The only hope to escape from the net that was closing in become to seek by a lightning thrust to break the military power of the Soviet Union and then to turn to advance against Britain and the United

States. Thus the attack on the Soviet Union is the decisive preliminary to the attack on every other people still unconquered by Nazism. The attack on the Soviet Union is the attack on the one effective military barrier which stands between the Nazi rulers and their dreams of world conquest. Thereby the attack on the Soviet Union is an attack on every people of the world.

The second series of considerations derived from the social-political situation. The advancing national movements of the subjugated peoples in Europe, who by no means intended to place their heads under the yoke of either imperialism, but were beginning to look more and more towards the Soviet Union as the representative of the freedom of the peoples, as well as the growth of discontent in Germany among the working masses, confronted the Nazi rulers with sharp problems. Once again they sought to solve their dilemmas by violent action, by a thrust at the fountain head, at the Soviet Union, the free and equal union of free peoples, which had already shown in relation to the Spanish and Chinese peoples its stand by peoples struggling for freedom, and by its example inspired all oppressed peoples with the hope of liberation. Thereby the attack on the Soviet Union is an attack on the national liberation movement of every people oppressed by Fascism.

The third series of considerations was diplomatic. By the attack on the Soviet Union the Nazi rulers hoped to divide the ruling class opinion in Britain and the United States, on the basis of an appeal to reactionary class sympathies; and by this means to paralyse or weaken their participation in the war, and to delay the entry of United States into the war.

### **Strategic Considerations**

Of these considerations the most important were those of a strategic character. During the second phase of the war critics and commentators in the Western countries all too often lost to view the world significance of the independent reserve power of the Soviet Union, which exercised its influence, and remained capable of exercising its influence with increasing effect as events developed, on the side of the interests of the peoples and against any and every form of reactionary world domination which might threaten to arise from the military fortunes of the conflict. But Hitler understood this

very well. When this legions overran Poland, and the Western Powers remained passive and unable or unwilling to help, it was the Soviet armies that barred his further advance and liberated thirteen millions of people. As soon as the Nazi advance overran Western Europe in the spring and early summer of 1940, leading to a complete shift in the balance and the most acute danger for the British people, it was the Soviet forces whose presence on the Eastern frontiers of Germany which restored the balance and saved the British people.

In this connection Hitler's own statement with regard to the reason why he was unable to win the Battle of Britain and finally vanquish Britain in those critical months of the late summer and early autumn of 1940 is worthy of note :—

“While our soldiers from May 10, 1940, onwards had been breaking the power of Britain and France in the West, the Russian military deployment on our Eastern frontier was being continued to a more and more menacing extent. From August, 1940, onwards I therefore considered it to be in the interests of the Reich no longer to permit our Eastern provinces to remain unprotected in the face of this tremendous concentration of Bolshevik divisions. Thus came about the result intended by the British and Russian co-operation—namely, the tying up of such powerful German force in the East that the radical conclusion of the war in the west, particularly as regards aircraft, could no longer be vouched for by the German High Command”. (Hitler's Proclamation, June 22, 1941)

Thus the crucial role in the Battle of Britain was played by the Soviet Union, whose forces cancelled out the otherwise overwhelming Nazi Air superiority, enabled the R. A. F. to stand up to the remaining Nazi Air Force and saved Britain from an annihilating assault. Today the British people will understand better the debt they owe to the Soviet people, not only at this moment, but also during these preceding two years.

Thus the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union is in fact the attack on the main military barrier to its dreams of world conquest. With the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union the war passed from its second phase into the third phase, the war of German Fascism for the enslavement of the world.

## **Role of Britain and the United States**

As soon as Nazi Germany launched its attack on the Soviet Union, and thus opened up the most gigantic and fateful military conflict in history, the critical question of the international situation became at once the attitude of Britain and the United States. Would the Nazi calculation to spread dissension in these countries, play on anti-Soviet ideological sympathies, and thus divide them from the Soviet people, cut them off from the alliance which could save them, and paralyse them in the decisive world conflict, win any success? That the heart of the people would rally, on the side of the Soviet people was certain. The last unofficial poll in the earlier months of 1939 had shown 87% of the population in favour of an Anglo-Soviet Pact, at a time when it was still being resisted by the Government.

But would the understanding of the most far-sighted representatives of the ruling class equally recognise the common interests, over-riding social and political differences, defeat the Nazi trap and proclaim the common cause in the present struggle?

To this question Churchill's broadcast June 22 gave the emphatic answer. Churchill, speaking on behalf of the Conservative Party and the National Government, made clear that he had not changed his standpoint with regard to the social and political system of the Soviet Union or with regard to Communism, but that in this conflict he recognised a common cause and a common enemy: "One aim and one single irrevocable purpose—to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. We will never parley, we will never negotiate with Hitler or any of his gang...Any man or State who fights against Nazism will have our aid...we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people...The Russian danger is our danger and the danger of the United States." This was the speech which Stalin referred to as "Churchill's historic utterance". There followed on June 23 the declaration of Sumner Welles on behalf of the United States: "In the opinion of this Government any rallying of the forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever source they may spring, will hasten the downfall of the German leaders, and will therefore be to the benefit of our own defence and security". On June 24 came the announcement by Eden

of the agreement of the British and Soviet Governments to co-operate on a reciprocal basis. followed by the exchange of Mission. and finally the signing of the British-Soviet Pact of Mutual Aid and Alliance on July 12 Hitler had his answer.

### **A Transformation of Policy**

Sharp as was the reversal of policy of the Nazi rulers, who in the preceding years leading up to 1939 had devoted all their efforts, first by the collaboration with Chamberlain, and then by the Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union, to prevent and avoid by every means the war on two fronts, and now, in 1941 by their own action had plunged into the war on two fronts, no less sharp was the reversal of policy of the British ruling class, who in those same years had devoted all their efforts to promoting war of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, and now when that war had broken out, had ranged themselves with the Soviet Union. It was indeed an ironic commentary on the whole preceding policy of the Clivedenite lords and ladies and the pro-Hitler magnates of the City, who had ruled the roost during those years, who had applauded Chamberlain and denounced Churchill, who had acclaimed Hitler as their darling and as their Champion against Bolshevism, that now, when at last they were to witness their erstwhile knight and champion proceed on his so-called "anti-Bolshevik crusade", they should find themselves unable to accompany him, that, after they had for so many years been bilked by false promises and sacrificed so much to see the longed for and constantly deferred war of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, now at last when it broke out, they should find themselves compelled, under the leadership of the politician they had denounced, to march in a common front with the Soviet Union. Such was the answer of the event to the poisoned dreams of Munich.

### **The Reasons—Common Interests**

What lay behind this transformation ? Two years of history. Two years of deepened crisis of British imperialism. Two years of bitter defeats and humiliations consequent on the whole preceding policy, the refusal of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the resulting isolation and weakness.

It is only necessary to recall the situation immediately preceding the new events, the debates in the House of Commons during May and June, the anxiety following the evacuation of Greece and Crete. The revelations of unpreparedness, the facts of production, the slowness of the American aid, the dissensions, vacillations and alarms in the ruling class, the accusations of Petainism against leading political representative, the new motto which had begun to find currency in the popular press that "we may lose the war" to recognise how critical was the situation to which the British people had been brought by the faults of their rulers.

In this situation the Anglo-Soviet Alliance was no longer a question of political controversy, it was an imperative necessity forcing itself on the recognition of all, not a dissentient voice dared to make itself heard. The Anglo-Soviet Alliance came as a salvation and a new hope, inspiring new confidence in the people. Gone were the old days of grudging and patronising recognition. The very existence of the British people is now bound up with this Alliance. It would no doubt have been better if this understanding had come earlier, if it had come six years ago, when this Alliance was first advocated by the Communist Party, if it had come five years ago, four years ago, three years ago, even two years ago, when it could still have prevented the present war. But it may be that only the ruthless teaching of experience could have created this wide and general understanding. War is a harsh political school which compels its lessons to be learnt quickly or not at all.

The Anglo-Soviet Alliance is based, not only on the deep friendship of the peoples, now strengthened by the sense of partnership in a common struggle against a hated and reactionary enemy, but also on the powerful immediate foundation of inescapable common interests in an hour of grave danger, when the greatest possible unity is indispensable for victory. This Alliance of the British and Soviet peoples, leading all peoples in the struggle for liberation against Fascism, must now become the rock and the anchor for the salvation of the British People, and be carried forward through the present days of trial to victory and to lay the basis for a better future.



For the British ruling class the Anglo-Soviet Alliance is the expression of common interests in an urgent immediate struggle. In the calculations of a ruling class there is no room for sentiment, but there is room for the recognition of practical common interests. In isolation Britain is not able to defeat Nazi Germany, and is faced with the most acute immediate peril. The American aid takes time to become effective, and the peril is immediate; further, the American aid is bound up with onerous conditions in respect of the concessions, economic, political and strategic, which have to be made. The Anglo-Soviet Alliance strengthens the position of the British ruling class in relation to the American ruling class.

Undoubtedly for the ruling class there are also ulterior calculations, and only the politically naive would be blind to them. They are well aware that the colossal conflict of all the forces of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union weakens both, while their own forces and the American forces are temporarily immune, and they look forward to a future perspective in which the Anglo-American forces will be able to ensure those social and political conditions which they regard as representative of civilisation and order, but on which the masses of the people and the nations oppressed by Fascism will have other views when the time comes. These issues of the future will be settled by the peoples, and their power to settle them in their own interests will depend on the strength of their active struggle today. But these issues of the future must not be allowed to stand in the way of maximum unity and maximum common effort of all forces opposed to Hitlerism in the present struggle, when every source of strength and every ally, irrespective of social and political outlook is needed for the defeat of the common enemy.

### **Third Phase of the War—A new Political Situation**

The war of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union and the British-Soviet Alliance have transformed the world situation and the political situation in every country. Every issue needs now to be judged in the light of this supreme conflict. The second phase of the war, the reactionary war of the Western imperialist powers for the new division of the world has passed into the third phase of the war, the just war for the liberation of the peoples against German Fascism. The imperialist rulers remain in power in Britain, they

still oppress India and the colonial people ; they maintain their class system in Britain; they still maintain their imperialist aims. But the objective significance of their war against Hitler has now become a part of the just war represented by the Soviet Union in association with the peoples oppressed or menaced by Fascism for liberation against Fascism. This is the vital issue which is now the common concern of every people in the world, including the colonial peoples, who have still to win their own freedom, but who are equally and unconditionally interested in the victory of the Soviet Union and the defeat of Fascism.

The Soviet Union has no imperialist interests or aims, the Soviet Union has from the first day of the conflict made clear that it regards the war as war against the Nazi rulers, not against the German people; it has made clear that victory carries with it the liberation of all peoples oppressed by Fascism. In this way the participation of the Soviet Union has transformed the character of the war, and opened the way to the participation of all peoples oppressed by Fascism, in the common struggle for their liberation, with the sure confidence that the strongest Power which is taking part in the fighting will equally protect the interests of their liberation in the final settlement.

The way is opened for the British people, fighting alongside the Soviet people, to range themselves for the same common aims of a peace based on the freedom of the peoples.

### **Tasks of the British People**

The Anglo-Soviet Pact equally transforms the political situation in this country. Here also every issue needs to be judged anew in the light of the new conditions and present needs.

The Churchill Government has now signed a Pact of Alliance with the Soviet Union. The Churchill Government has proclaimed the policy of joint war with the Soviet Union for the defeat of Hitlerite Germany. Since this issue is the decisive issue today, overriding all other issues, it is obvious that these facts must govern the attitude of all class conscious workers and the militant Left at the present moment to the Churchill Government, however much they may differ from it on other questions or be opposed to the

political standpoint of the individual members composing it. Without regard to such differences, we give the most wholehearted support to the Churchill Government in every measure it adopts in the fulfilment of his policy. We demand of the Churchill Government the most active fulfilment of this policy, and we pledge the fullest co-operation and support in its fulfilment.

Our fire is directed, not against the supporters of the Pact, but against its opponents or those who seek to sabotage it. This is the decisive political criterion at present.

The urgent need now is the fullest mobilisation and active unity of all sections of the people for the fulfilment of the tasks of the common struggle with the Soviet people for the defeat of Hitler. We strive for the United National Front of all sections of the people (not only of the Left anti-imperialist For pro-Soviet elements, but of all opposed to Hitler and supporting the Pact) to drive forward the maximum effort in the joint war with the Soviet Union for the defeat of Hitler. The Alliance needs to be made effective with the fullest strength of the British people. We cannot be satisfied with a situation in which one partner to the Alliance is bearing the entire brunt of the fighting, while the other remains inactive in a military sense. We cannot be proud of a situation in which the Soviet Union in isolation is engaging nine-tenths of the military forces of Nazism, while the remaining tenth, containing mainly the older and invalid elements, is thinly spread over the occupied countries, and the entire might of the British Empire, with sea power at its common, finds it beyond its strength to attempt to engage or even harry the tenth. This is a very unequal and one sided alliance.

As the terrific battle goes forward in the East, the question of the military second front becomes every day more pressing

### **No Complacency, But Active Struggle**

We need to combat the widespread passivity and complacency which is as fatal as it is short-sighted. We need to awaken the people to the urgent sense of their own peril, to the understanding that their fate depends on what is done now. The same spirit which animates the Soviet people, the spirit of invincible dynamic energy, unsparing common endeavour and single-minded purpose, over-coming every

obstacle. needs to be emulated here. The dis-organisation of production cannot be tolerated, but, despite the limits of the existing structure of industry, needs to be combatted with that burning urgency which can compel action even from the most lethargic and incompetent authorities. All this can only be accomplished to the extent that the masses of the people themselves, and the organised workers in the first place, act, push, drive, and take the initiative, both politically and in the sphere of production, industry and social organisation. Within the broad national front the working class and democratic movement must necessarily be the driving force; the need for working class Unite and the revived activity of the labour organisations is greater than ever.

It is necessary to be prepared for the sharpest issues of every type in front. The present situation, in which every day is carrying the fate of all peoples in the balance, calls for the greatest effort. The strength of the initial stand of the Soviet people against the onslaught of the Nazi military machine has given rise to the most dangerous false confidence and illusions here. Our concern and responsibility is to see that the people of this country do their full part and pull their full weight in the Common Alliance. This is the single practical task which governs every activity today.

## WHY THIS IS OUR WAR

*The following is a reprint of the Editorial that appeared in the "New Masses" on July 8th 1941. It represents the views of the Communist Party of U.S.A and explains clearly to the American people why the character of the war has changed and what the task of the people in the new situation is.*

### Why This<sup>\*</sup> is Our War

History takes another sharp turn. Transformations in the character of the War. New tactics and new values. How to defend our country by helping the USSR.

That famous locomotive of history has taken another sudden turn. And as in 1939, there may be a few who find themselves flung off and sprawling by the roadside because they lost their grip in rounding the bend. We live in dynamic times, when the process of

history matures so rapidly that we must be prepared for cataclysmic changes that overnight transform values, meanings, relationships. Actually, what appears to be sudden is nearly the explosive emergence of forces that have been in gestation over months and years. Last week new Masses devoted almost its entire issue to a discussion of the momentous turning point signaled by the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. Since then, the implications of that attack have become clearer. Throughout the country the common folk have begun to sense them. In their hearts indignation mingles with hope—hope that at last the hideous might of Hitlerism has met its master, and that the fight to free the world from this scourge has begun in earnest. In Chicago the Cook County CIO Council adopted a resolution calling for “co-operation and support to the Soviet Union by our government.” In New York, Local 16 of the AFL Hotel and Restaurant Workers’ Union, which is under conservative leadership, urged support for “all nations attacked by Hitler fascism, including the Soviet Union.” In the Northwest the Washington Commonwealth Federation spoke up for aid to the U.S.S.R. Among the Jewish people there has been such unanimity of feeling that even bitterly anti-Soviet Yiddish newspapers have been compelled to adopt themselves to the prevailing mood. On street corners, at meetings, in homes throughout the country Americans of all nationalities, deeply stirred, have found their sympathies suddenly catapulted to a country whom their press and radio had depicted in the most hateful terms as an ally of fascism.

In this new vast shift in world affairs all of us are faced with the necessity of re-examining our position. For if we are to work with and not against history, if we are to lift from the minds of men the blighting shadow of fascism, we must grasp the essential meaning of the new situation and make our acts conform to the changed reality. It is impossible at this time to give definitive answers to all the problems that emerge, but the central fact must be understood is that the attack of German fascism on the USSR has changed the character of the war. And one need not apologise for saying that when the character of the war changes, programs, slogans, and tactics must also change. While basic principles and ultimate goals remain the same, they must now be approached by

a different road because the old road has disappeared under the impact of the Soviet-Nazi war.

For nearly two years New Masses opposed the war that began in September 1939 and all American support was for one side in that conflict. But our opposition was not to war as such—we are not pacifists and know that only socialism can bring lasting peace—nor was it based on the isolationist illusion that what happens in Europe or Asia does not affect the American people. We opposed the war because, like its predecessor in 1914–18, it represented nothing more than a struggle between two imperialist groups for a new redivision of plunder and empire. A victory for either side in such a war could result not in the liberation of enslaved peoples but in their further subjugation by one or the other set of imperialist masters under fascist controls. We therefore called on the American people to oppose the designs of the government and to join with the English people and the peoples under the fascist heel in working for a different alternative ; a democratic people peace which would mean defeat for both contending imperialist groups. We emphasised that in this struggle the common people of all countries had a powerful ally in the Soviet Union, which had striven to prevent the war when that proved impossible, had negotiated the non-aggression pact with Germany in order to safeguard its neutrality and limit the spread of the conflict. At the same time New Masses opposed not only the policy of the government, but also the reactionary non-interventionists at the head of the American First Committee. We pointed out the spurious character of the peace talk of the latter group, and exposed their pro-fascist, imperialist aims.

Looking back today we believe that our policy of the past two years has been fully vindicated. We are proud of the part we played in helping to clarify the issues and nourishing all that was best in American life. In our struggle against fascism, just as in our solidarity with the peoples of Great Britain and Germany there is an unbroken continuity even though the forms and tactics of this activity now require change. For the policy of the past two years no longer corresponds to the actual world situation that has been created by the Nazi assault on the USSR. For the first time a country has become involved which seeks no loot, which has no

capitalist class that can profit by exploiting the wealth of other nations. For the first time a country is fighting—a great federation of 193,000,000 free peoples—whose victory will mean not the replacement of one fascist cabal by another, but the true liberation of the peoples of Europe and the ending of the fascist threat to the common folk of England and the America. And for the first time this new development expresses not the conflict between two imperialist bandits, but the direct assault of fascist imperialism on the people—the people everywhere. By that assault Hitler has faced all peoples with the necessity of uniting their forces to wipe Hitlerism and fascism from the face of the earth. Only in this way can a genuine people's peace be achieved

For those who may be unable to see why the invasion of the Soviet Union changes the character of the war, let us put the matter this way. Suppose our government had previously adopted the policy we urged of strict neutrality in the European war and collaboration with the USSR for peace. This would have aligned the two greatest powers of the world whose joint efforts would have decisively affected the course of the war and perhaps made possible a people's peace. But even had Germany won, she would still have been faced with the combination of the Soviet Union and the United States. To-day, with the invasion of the USSR, there is no longer the question of another Yugoslavia or Greece, but of the possible destruction of a power approximately equal to that of the United States. Moreover since Siberia is separated from the American-owned Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska by only a narrow strip of water, a Nazi victory over the USSR would bring the fascist threat to the very shores of our own country. It is clear that with the Soviet Union and Britain conquered, the United States would indeed be left alone in a world under Nazi combination. Here then, is conclusive evidence that the character of the war has been fundamentally altered.

The argument will be made that the imperialists of Britain and the United States continue to seek their former objectives. Three things need be said on this score : first, if the British and American Governments strike energetically at Germany, they willynilly are helping the Soviet Union and their own peoples to exterminate

**Hitlerism.** Every British bomb dropped on German military objectives furthers this end. Secondly, by their offers of aid to the USSR the British and American governments are abandoning their former anti-soviet policy. They are thereby beginning to adopt the course long advocated by the British People's Convention and by progressives in this country. And finally, the peoples of Britain and United States have the duty to take advantage of this exceptional situation, in which their Governments are necessarily on the same side with the people's Government of the USSR, to compel their rulers to undertake without delay the closest collaboration with the Soviet Union in order to assure a smashing defeat to German Fascism. Such a defeat would likewise frustrate the aims of the most reactionary Wall Street and London imperialists. What is required is the creation of the broadest people's front directed against Hitlerism at home and abroad, part of an international front of all the people fighting the monstrous juggernaut of Fascism.

Marxists judge each war concretely in its fullest historical context. During the nineteenth century Marx and Engles always supported one side as against the other in the wars of Europe and in our own Civil War. Their position in every situation was dictated by the interests of the working class, by consideration of what course would promote the advance of mankind. Thus in the Franco-Prussian war they at first supported Bismarck Germany, despite the reactionary character of the regime because they viewed this phase of the war as a struggle for national unification against the efforts of Napoleon III to dismember a Germany still suffering from Semi-feudal separatism. The founders of scientific communism warned, however, of the possibility that the war might take a reactionary turn. When after the battle of Sedan and the fall of the French monarchy, Bismarck continued the war in order to annex Alsace-Lorraine and subjugate the French people, Marx and Engles opposed Germany.

It was only with the rise of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, when capitalism, ceasing to be a progressive force, entered the parasitic monopoly stage, that wars among the great powers assumed a completely reactionary form. That is why the genuine Marxists in Russia, Germany and other countries and



especially the Russian Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin. opposed the war of 1914-18 as imperialist on both sides. But Lenin did not entirely exclude the possibility, remote though it was, that the first imperialist war might be transformed into a national war, that is, a progressive struggle for national liberation and independence. In an article written in 1915 he pointed out that "in a condition of the great exhaustion of the 'great powers' in the present war or under conditions of victory of the revolution in Russia, national wars and indeed victorious ones are fully possible." In another article written in the same year he pointed out that in all countries interested in maintaining international treaties had declared war on Germany and genuinely fought for no other purpose than the liberation of Belgium. "The sympathy of the Socialists would naturally be on the side of Germany's enemies." He added however that in the war that was then raging Belgium was the mere pretext in a conflict for purely imperialist objectives. In the same way the invasion of Poland in 1939 was a pretext in a war precipitated by the rivalry and intrigue of the two imperialist blocs. But if in 1914-18 it was theoretically possible for the character of the war to be changed, how much truer is that today when the enormous weight of the Land of Socialism is thrown into the scales ? Clearly, whatever the motives of British and American imperialism, the involvement of the Soviet Union has introduced a powerful magnetic force which can draw around itself the peoples on both sides of the conflict in an all-out people's struggle for their own salvation. And the magnificent efforts of the Chinese people to drive out Hitler's axis partner, the Japanese invader, now becomes more directly linked to the world struggle against fascism.

Does the fact of the USSR's involvement mean that its pervious policy was mistaken, as so many anti-Soviet commentators hasten to point out ? On the contrary the Soviet Union has been forced into the war under conditions that are infinitely more favourable for itself than they would have been two years ago, lacking any British and French guarantees. Testimony to the correctness of Soviet policy has come inferentially from no less an anti-Sovieteer than Dorothy Thompson. In her column on June 25 discussing the Hess episode and its relation to the attack on the USSR, she wrote :

“It is my belief that Hitler was making a tremendous gamble on Britain getting out of the war as a result of this development (the Nazi attack). Were the same political brains ruling England that ruled it up until two years ago, exactly that would have happened.” What Miss Thompson is here unwittingly admitting is that the Chamberlain Government, under the cloak of friendly overtures, was actually seeking to involve it single-handed in war against Germany. And hence she is also admitting that the USSR was fully justified in taking steps to protect itself against that stratagem by negotiating the non-aggression pact with Germany.

Let it be remembered that it was the Soviet Union which repeatedly sought an alliance of peoples and Governments to halt fascist aggression. And it was the Government of Britain and France and for that matter the United States that rebuffed these efforts, only to cry “doublecrossed” when faced with the disastrous consequences of their own treachery. Had that alliance been effectuated in time, it would probably have prevented the war, had war come nevertheless, it would from the outset have had a progressive character on the part of the collective security bloc and the defeat of Hitlerism would have been a much simpler task than it is today. By frustrating the schemes of the appeasers, the USSR gained almost two years of precious time. During this period its own economic and military might has greatly increased and its strategic position improved through the extension of its borders, while the crisis of German fascism, despite one military victory after another, has deepened. And now when the long awaited attack has been launched, it has come in a situation in which the British and American Government, instead of being able to isolate the Soviet Union are compelled because of their imperialist difference with Germany, to offer assistance to the USSR. Thus, when the radio commentator Johannes Steel, Concedes that the Soviet policy in the Baltics was justified after all, he indicates that it was he and such liberal magazines as the Nation and the New Republic that erred when they hailed the white guard Finnish regime as a genuine democracy. No less did they err in their estimate of other aspects of Soviet policy and of the strength of the Red Army.

( Here follows an account of the differences and indecision over this issue in the circles of American big business. )

It is clear that the American people will have to combat these big business obstructionists in the most determined fashion. They are the forces that led the fight against the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal reforms before the outbreak of the war, and through their position of influence i.e the OPM, the State and War Depts. and other government agencies they are seeking once more to prevent the administration from the taking that path which alone can safeguard the liberties of the people. In this situation the clear voice of the Communist Party points the way "Through their organised efforts," declares the manifesto unanimously adopted at the recent meeting of its national committee. "the American people must make the policy of the American government a genuine policy of friendship, collaboration with the Soviet Union, a policy that gives all aid to the Soviet and British peoples. The American peoples must throw in the full weight of their might and power to defeat German fascism." At the same time the manifesto declares that the people must not fail to speak out plainly against every tendency of the government to conciliate the enemies of the nation to appease the appeasers.

All Aid to the USSR and Britain, which is in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the American people, must also have its domestic counterpart. The economic royalist who are today obstructing the development of a truly anti-Hitler foreign policy are likewise seeking to force the government to employ Hitler methods against the people at home. And effective fight against Hitlerism, requires the defence of the right to strike, improvement of the peoples' living standards, government action to curb profiteering and prevent monopoly sabotage such as has been revealed in the case of the Aluminium trust. It requires the cessation of every form of discrimination against the Negro people, a halt to anti Semitism and attacks on the foreign born. And an effective fight against Hitlerism, requires an end to the assault on civil liberties particularly the persecution of Communists and other progressives. The imprisonment of America's foremost anti-fascist Earl Browder stands as an indictment of the character of the government's post war effort. His release now would be a blow at Hitler and his American friends and a powerful aid to our own struggle against the fascist menace.

**Our country moves to great decisions. We cannot delay because time fights on the side of the enemy. Whether the Roosevelt administration accedes to the wishes of the most reactionary monopolists or lives up to its anti-fascist pronouncements and its pledges of aid to the Soviet Union depends in great part on how quickly and effectively organised labour leaps into the breach.**

**The trade unions must be the mainspring of this movement. All aid to the Soviet Union and Britain all aid to China must for all of us become the deepest purpose of our lives. We the people can win this battle for the future. We have the power to move mountains to destroy Fascism. LET US ACT**

# HARRY POLLITT'S APPEAL

## TO THE MEMBERS OF C.P.G.B.—FOR THE DEFEAT OF FASCISM

Dear Comrades,

The dastardly attack of German fascism on the Soviet Union brought about an immediate change in the entire world situation—a change that Churchill's speech, Stalin's reply, Stalin's epoch making speech, and Eden's declaration at Leeds have all emphasised as representing a fundamentally new situation in which every government, and every political party has had to respond with new policies and a new approach to all questions.

The Communist party, naturally, immediately changed its political line to meet the new position and tasks imposed upon it. It made changes that have to be carried through without mental reservation of any kind and not in any tongue-in-the-cheek state of mind.

Our comrades know that it is an axiom of Marxism that the Communist Party formulates all its policies in accordance with the concrete situation that exists—not one that we imagine, or would like to see exist, but as it actually is, in all its grim reality. This is why we straightaway emphasise the fact that in carrying out the policy of the Party, no countenance can be given to any forms of speculation that in any way impede the mightiest effort our Party has ever made to defend the interests of the British people, interests that today demand the closest and most practical forms of co-operation with the Soviet Union.

The war for the defeat of Hitler is now the supreme issue before the whole of democratic and progressive mankind. This is what needs to be understood in all its decisiveness, for it governs our

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(Section of the C. I.) as per circular NO. 54 dated 1. 12. 1941.*

entire political approach to every question standing before the people. In this situation, there is only one consideration which governs our attitude; those who are for the defeat of Hitler, and those who openly or covertly endeavour to sabotage the achievement of the victory of the British and Soviet people over Hitler.

*THAT IS WHY WE FIGHT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED NATIONAL FRONT OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE FOR HITLER'S DEFEAT.*

In the light of this, our attitude to the Churchill Government is plain and clear. Our fight is not directed against the Churchill Government, but those who are the secret friends of Hitler. We are putting the issue now standing before our Party so sharply because we understand the difficulties that can occur in making the swift adjustment of our policy to meet the new position that its urgency demands. We know that for two years our Party has fought for a political line that has now to be changed; it was a policy that was correct in the circumstances in which it was operative, but to-day those circumstances no longer exist.

We should forfeit all claim to be a responsible and serious political party if we did not see the need for adopting the present policy of our Party.

The people of the Soviet Union also have had to make swift adjustments and they have made them with unparalleled speed, and have done so in a way that has aroused the amazed admiration of the whole world.

The Churchill Government and all the historic political parties of Britain have also adjusted their political line and we take note of and welcome this fact, for already it has had profound and important repercussions throughout the world.

But in our party, doubts are still being voiced that can give the impression that here is disappointment that the Churchill Government has not lined up with Hitler against the Soviet Union in order to prove some theoretical point about the only line of British Imperialism being to effect a switch off the war against the Soviet Union.

Why do we put the question as sharply as this? Simply to put in the sharpest possible way before the whole Party what is now in the position, what is demanded of us and what is at stake.

There can be no doubt in the mind of any Party member who thinks of the situation as a whole, that the fact that the Churchill Government and the Soviet Union are now fighting side by side in the common task of defeating fascism is the outstanding feature of the situation. And if some Communists did not expect it neither did Hitler nor a lot of other powerful forces in the world.

Speculation on how long this co-operation will last, how soon before a switch is made, are fatal at the present time. *THEY REPRESENT DEFEATISM IN ITS WORST POSSIBLE FORM, LACK OF FAITH IN OUR OWN CLASS, OUR PARTY AND THE SOUND INSTINCTS OF THE PEOPLE, OR THE MIGHTY SERVICE NOW BEING RENDERED TO WORLD HUMANITY BY THE SOVIET UNION*

Undoubtedly there are forces in Britain who would like to make a switch, but they are not the dominant forces. If, however, any sectarian attitude of the Communist Party, any standing aside and not pulling our full weight in the common effort to defeat Hitler, any putting forward impossible demands is permitted, any irresponsible fighting of by-elections in present conditions, then our Party simply plays into the hands of the dark forces who are waiting for such an opportunity to take advantage of dissensions and splits in the national fight against fascism, opportunities that will never come if we do our job as our Party can do it, when we are all in it full tilt.

This is why we are not going into any long drawn-out historical explanations of why the present position has come about, what led up to it, how long it will last, when will the switch come, and all the rest of the speculations that are absorbing the time and energy of certain circles of our Party.

Speculation! —When at this moment we know for deadly certainty that the flower of the Soviet people are drenching with their blood and bodies every inch of Soviet soil to protect and defend it against the bloody fascist marauders!

Speculation! —When battles are taking place, the like of which the world has never seen before, when thousands of tanks and aeroplanes and millions of men are locked in death grips from the Arctic to the South of the Soviet Union, when events are taking

place that make all that Wells or Verne ever wrote look like child's play.

We only remind our Party of a few facts :—

1. When in the pre-war days we campaigned for a People's Front and alliance with the Soviet Union, we specifically and repeatedly demanded a Government in which we were prepared to take our part, headed by men like Churchill, Attlee and Sinclair.

2. Now when this same combination, through the circumstances of history and the desperate position of Britain, have changed their past attitude towards the Soviet Union, we are prepared to give this Government our full support as the serious earnest of our intention to do everything in our power to achieve a united national front, that alongside the Soviet Union can defeat Hitler-fascism.

3. If the Soviet Union failed to defeat Hitler's attack (though this we do not for one moment countenance), it would only happen through lack of concrete support from such countries as Britain, and the responsibility of our Party would be a heavy one indeed if we had not at every stage of the situation shown in the most practical manner our determination to make the most helpful contribution towards the creation of a united national front. This is the principal political reason why we withdrew our candidate from Greenock. We should have got a large vote, yes—but we should have split the front when our comrades in the Soviet Union are dying in defence of that front. It would have caused a complete misunderstanding of the position of our Party throughout the country, creating the most powerful obstacles to the unity of all the anti-fascist forces, it is now imperative should be established. Let there be no mistake about that. Or about the fact if Hitler were successful, the British people would then feel the whole gigantic might of his barbaric military power on their won backs. And against these facts everything else dwarfs into insignificance.

This is why it is necessary to avoid giving any impression that our present policy is determined solely because the Soviet Union has been attacked. Our line is in the vital interests of the British people, which now, more than ever, are bound up with those of the people of the Soviet Union.



Remember how finely Comrade Stalin put this aspect of the question when in reply to Churchill's speech he stated that his offer was accepted on the "basis of reciprocal aid."

Reciprocal aid. What does it mean? Simply that you help us, and we help you, or as the Manifesto of the Central Committee states: "Their fight is *Indeed* your fight. And your fight is *Theirs*".

This is why in supporting the Churchill Government we do it wholeheartedly without any reservations, without harping on the disagreements of the past, or raising the fundamental difference between the Communist Party and other political parties. Irresponsible persons, including to our regret, certain elements in the Labour Party may do so, but our aims are bigger; we are above such an incapacity to see the gigantic tasks that have to be carried through now, without hesitation or equivocation, if the British people are to pull their full weight alongside the Soviet people and save themselves from the horrors of fascism.

In the light of what is happening in the Soviet Union today and can happen in Britain tomorrow, what does it matter what Gallacher said about Attlee or what the "Daily Worker" said about "The Times" or that Twelve communists were in prison in 1936, while Churchill was editing the "British Gazette". There are insignificant things of past history that have no place in the titanic event of the present time. Therefore, the policy of the Party is now clearly laid down in the Manifesto of the Central Committee new being distributed throughout the country

What is the essence of this policy? That we fight for full co-operation with the Soviet Union through a pact of alliance with the Soviet Union on the basis of mutual aid. That we expose the friends of fascism and clear them out of all government posts. That we fight to organise the maximum production for victory, the ending of waste and disorganisation, the ensuring of equal distribution of food supplies and adequate ARP protection. In this way we are strengthening the pre-requisites for victory and defending the daily interests of the people. That we work to achieve the mobilisation of the entire people for victory through the fullest democratic activity and initiative.

**THIS AND NOTHING ELSE IS THE POLICY OF THE PARTY**

It is true that previous statements have not been as specific as this last one; that is because even the leadership of our Party was not quick enough to realise immediately the responsibilities that the new situation had placed upon us, and because we, too, tended to be obsessed with that had been our approach in the entirely different circumstances of the past. We know you will give serious consideration to this letter. We are confident that if the policy of our Party is now presents as our Party knows how to present a line, once it goes into action, then many of the considerations that are at present holding back the full force of our blows and power will disappear.

Concentrate on the positive on the bold popularising of our concrete demands. This is the way to get our policy across. Positive proposals do more to win conviction than all the criticism in the world. Our Party history shows on many occasions, our attitude for criticism to the neglect of unfolding our positive policy. *THE FIGHT FOR OUR POLICY IS NOW WITNESSED* This is what will rouse the people and make them give it their support; will build up such power in the factories and unions as will prevent any monkey tricks or side-stepping; will force through the carrying out of measures to ensure the fullest co-operation and alliance with the Soviet Union. This is what will get the maximum in increased production and the taking of effective military steps that will give Hitler the war on two fronts that he has always dreaded. This is what will win the Party influence and respect. Communists setting the example in the factories and all the decisive productive undertakings. This is the policy that will mobilise the people to demand the lifting of the ban on the "Daily Worker". They will insist upon it so that they have the guarantee of a daily weapon in their hands that will give life, purpose and inspiration in the fight for the national untied front against fascism, an alliance of Britain, the Soviet Union and the fullest utilisation of all resources of this country along-side those of the Soviet Union. This will bring people into action. For they are in no mood for speculation. They have already gone through far too much to tolerate now anything that can prevent the

final blow being given to Fascism, and woe betide those who in any way attempt to divert the people from this aim.

As circumstances change, as events unfold themselves, the Party leadership will react to these changes and show what need to be done, *BUT NOW EVERY MINUTE, EVERY HOUR, EVERY DAY COUNTS IN GETTING INTO ACTION IN POPULARISING OUR PRESENT DEMANDS.* John Reed once wrote a book called "Ten Days That shook the World". Our Soviet comrades have just gone through fourteen days that have saved the world. This is the biggest historical fact of our lifetime. They are still fighting as you read this fighting to defend their land and ours. For twenty-four years they have struggled and sacrificed, gone through civil war, famine, the restoration period, the hard, lean years of the First five Year Plan. They have built up what the ebbs have described as the "greatest social experiment in the history of the world". They are defending it now with a tenacity, heroism and courage that is unequalled in the long and a stormy annals of the struggle of the people for freedom. Think of what Hitler has done in fourteen days in other parts of the world, and what he has come up against in the Soviet Union, even though he has made all Europe amunition factory and conscripted millions of unwilling soldiers of fight and die for a cause they detect.

### **Comrades All !**

Unless we now go into action, dominated and inspired by what is taking place in the Soviet Union as you read this letter, we shall be committing an unforgivable crime. We are confident our Party will prove itself worthy of its great mission in this, the most serious and dangerous situation we have ever had to face; and that as a result of our contribution we will have immeasurably strengthened the common cause of the British and Soviet people, namely, the complete and utter annihilation of fascism from the face of the earth.

Yours fraternally,  
On behalf of the Secretariat,  
Sd/-Harry Pollitt

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## **THE COMMUNIST PARTY POLICY ON SITUATION**

**Dear Comrades,**

In the present urgent situation, the thought that should dominate our minds is : "What can I contribute to the common victory of the British and Soviet peoples? How can I do my share to get the maximum fulfilment of the Anglo-Soviet Pact of alliance?"

In the East, the 193 million Soviet peoples are facing the forces of fascism. The Red Army is fighting with magnificent courage. The Soviet peoples are working like supermen in industry and agriculture. Behind the Nazi lines, armed bands of the people break havoc on the enemy's forces.

For the sake of their own land, for our sake, and for the sake of the peoples of the world, the Soviet peoples are making enormous efforts and sacrifices.

**Our Job .**

*THE JOB OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE IS TO SMASH HITLER IN THE WEST WHILE THE SOVIET PEOPLES BATTER HIM IN THE EAST, TO MAKE HITLER'S 'NIGHTMARE'—THE WAR ON TWO FRONTS COME TRUE. TO OVERCOME EVERY OBSTACLE THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF THE GREATEST EFFORT, AND THE MOST EFFICIENT MOBILISATION OF THE FULL FORCES AND RESOURCES OF OUR COUNTRY IN THE COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FASCIST FOE.*

What does this mean in industry?

At present, production delays in war industries are a gigantic national scandal. Workers—through no fault of their own—are compelled to stand in idleness, wasting precious hours, days and weeks. One firm cannot obtain material, while another in the same district has more than it can use. The 10 per cent on cost system of payment in certain industries is a premium on slow and inefficient work.

*THE FIGHT AGAINST OBSTACLES TO INCREASED PRODUCTION  
THE MOBILISATION OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE FOR THE FULL*

**SUPPORT OF THE ANGLO-SOVIET PACT OF ALLIANCE MEANS THAT THESE AND SIMILAR SCANDALS MUST BE ENDED.** Workers who are on yard committees in shipbuilding, the pit committees in mining, and the new area production committees being set up by the Government to advise production problems, they too, can perform a similar service.

As an essential part of this campaign, shop stewards and trade unionists should insist that the Government Departments concerned should call production conferences at which the representatives of the workers can expose the hindrances and put forward their positive proposals for increased efficiency. And wherever any campaign for increased output is being organised—such as that in the mining industry, the workers through their trade unions, should take part in it, and put forward their constructive proposals.

### **Maximum Production with Protection of Workers' Conditions**

All factors which hinder the worker giving of his best, must be removed. Bad transport arrangements to and from work, low rations in industries where a full canteen is not possible (i.e. mining), industrial fatigue resulting from excessive hours—are all hindering output.

**THEIR REMOVAL WOULD LEAD TO A TREMENDOUS INCREASE IN PRODUCTION**

One of the outstanding barriers to greater production is the knowledge of workers who are on piece work and bonus that if they increase their output and their earnings, the employers will use this as an excuse for cutting piece rates and bonus times. The employers must give a clear understanding and guarantee that piece rates and bonus times will not be cut, on matter the extent of the workers' earnings.

The introduction of piece-work in other industries (e.g. building) should depend on whether the piece-work agreement adequately protects the interests of the workers and is likely to lead to greater output. If such guarantees are satisfactory, workers will not oppose the introduction of piece-work.

## **The Essential Work Order**

The Essential work Order, in the way that it has been operated, and especially in the way that its penal clauses have been used against the workers, and no action taken against the employers whose inefficiency is the principal cause of the chaos in production has caused great resentment.

Those penal clauses which have been used to victimise workers and hinder their organisation, and which have in consequence proved an obstacle to production should be revised. Progress in this direction will help in the campaign to reduce lateness and absenteeism to vanishing point. Here again the Shop Stewards and factory organisation will be decisive in getting results.

## **Labour Transference**

Wherever transference of labour is necessary to obtain an increase in production and speeding up of the war effort, the interests of the workers must be fully protected. Transferred workers should be paid their previous district rate in their new job. Adequate lodging allowances and accommodation should be guaranteed.

All transfers should be carried out only after full discussion with the Shop Stewards and Trade Union representatives of the workers concerned. Transference must not be used as a cover to weaken factory and trade union organisation.

## **Attitude to Strike**

The right to strike in the last resort remains the indispensable weapon of the workers for defence of their vital interests. There can be no question, therefore, of giving up the right to strike.

But it should be possible to secure a satisfactory solution of all questions which are causing unrest at the present time, i.e. methods of labour, transference, payment for fire-watching, etc. as a result of the fullest participation by the workers and their factory and trade union branch and district organisation in all negotiations and discussions.

It is absolutely essential to obtain the fullest consultation with the leadership on all such matters.

## National Wages Policy

In the new circumstances the workers should be prepared to consider a National Wages Policy which will reduce industrial grievances and enable them to make greater efforts

In the discussions which are proceeding around this policy, the following guiding lines should be emphasised :—

1. Wages should be raised to the level of the increased cost of living.
2. The cost of living should be pinned b, price-control, and adequate supply of the controlled goods ensured to the workers.
3. Industries or sections of workers whose wages are exceptionally low should be given special consideration.

## Issues at Stake

This policy is essential if the British people are to play their full part in the fight against Hitler Germany, the main enemy of mankind. It is a policy which will be enthusiastically supported by all militant workers.

At the same time we are aware that the eyes of some will be blinded to the greater issues of the day by their trade union narrowness and craft sectarianism. Previous attitudes will continue to influence them like a ghost from the past. We know that our Party can speedily overcome such difficulties, and, inspired by what the Soviet workers are doing, each member will set the highest standard for attendance, time-keeping, efficiency and production in the workshops.

*THE FUTURE OF ALL MANKIND IS BEING DECIDED IN THE MOST GIGANTIC BATTLE OF HISTORY THIS IS THE MOST DECISIVE ASPECT OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE. TO WHICH ALL LESSER ASPECTS, ALL CRAFT TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS, MUST BE SUBORDINATED.* If every worker is made to feel that his workshop is a part of the world battlefield, the men and women of our class will respond in a way that will be a revelation, they will build the mighty united movement of the people that will sweep away all barriers to efficient production, and mobilise the full powers and resources of our country in the common struggle.

They will join the ranks of our party in ever-increasing numbers, and help to organise the peoples' victory over fascism that will open the way to a better future for all mankind.

Yours fraternally,  
The Political Bureau  
C. P. G. B.

July, 24, 1941

## **OUR NEW LINE ON WAR\***

### **British Comrades, Correct Us**

In this Party Letter we are reprinting the full and authoritative text of two important documents which the British Communist Party published in the very first month after Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union. These documents which have just come to our hands are an eye-opener to us. They make us at once see that we, the Polit-Bureau and the leadership of the Communist Party of India have been putting forward a completely wrong political line on the supreme issue before all mankind, namely, the joint war against Hitler-fascism.

Those documents and especially Comrade Pollitt's brilliant letter to the British party make us realise as in a flash that in formulating our policy, we have allowed ourselves to be misled by our own "theories" and 'speculations" which were product of our bourgeois-nationalism, rather than by the proletarian internationalism of Marx and Lenin. Not only this, we explained the policy of the British Communist Party about which we got hints in the daily press, in accordance with our "pet theories" and not how it actually stood.

This may appear as a shocking admission for a leadership to make, in any other Party. But this is not the case with the Communist Party. Every mistake, whoever commits it, as soon as it is realised and proved as a mistake, must be corrected, must be laid bare to

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\* *Views of the Communist Party of India*



its very roots and eradicated and the lesson learned. For us Communists, it is not a question of sticking to prestige or to pet theories of individuals but of evolving a correct policy which corresponds to the urgent needs and demands of the proletariat and the people of our country and recognising how these, at every time, also corresponds with the needs and aims of the international proletariat and of all progressive mankind.

In explaining the policy, which the British communists were following, we in our literature so far, presented it coloured by our own pre-occupations. It is true we had no more information about their policy that we got from the "Reuter" reports in the daily press. But that was quite sufficient for us to present it correctly, had we grasped properly the big and the decisive change brought about in the whole war situation by Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union by the Anglo-Soviet and the Soviet-American agreements.

### **Where we went wrong**

We correctly emphasised the significance of the Anglo-Soviet Agreement as a new and a great turning point in this war. We said more or less correctly :— "The just war, the war in the defence of fatherland which the Soviet Union is waging, is now **VITALLY LINKED UP** with the war which Britain is waging against Germany. Every effective blow which the British forces deliver against Hitler ensures Soviet victory and the defeat of Hitler **WHO IS NOW THE MAIN AGGRESSOR**. All the progressive people and the workers of the world of course, desire the victory of the Soviet Union, for it is the victory of the most progressive achievement of mankind". (Anglo-Soviet agreement, p.5).

In this very pamphlet, we quoted Comrade Lozovsky saying that the Anglo-Soviet Agreement has 'altered fundamentally the international situation. We said that Britain's war was now 'vitally linked' with Soviet peoples' just war and that "Hitler had now become the main aggressor". But these remained as phrases in our mouth because we had just not grasped the big and decisive change they implied.

We quoted and re-quoted the historic words which Stalin spoke

on the 3rd of July : "Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence and democratic liberties. It will be a united front of the peoples standing for freedom against enslavement and threats of enslavement by Hitler's fascist armies". (quoted from "International Literature", June-July 1941, Moscow). But we forgot to note that Stalin's "will" became "is" as soon as the Anglo-Soviet alliance of *Mutual Alliance* and the Soviet American Agreement became a fact. In other words, the Soviet peoples' war had now become in fact an all-peoples war against the main aggressor—Hitler-fascism. This was what Com. Lozovsky meant by "fundamental change" in the international situation.

### **The Decisive Shift**

Comrade Pollitt and the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain at once grasped the supreme issue that underlay "the fundamentally new situation", which came into existence with the dastardly attack of German fascism on the Soviet Union. Their sound proletarian internationalism at once makes them see that "the war for the defeat of Hitler is now the supreme issue before the whole democratic and progressive mankind".

Comrade Pollitt sharply warns the Party comrades to get away from all speculations and theorising as to what the British imperialists would do now and in the future. As a Bolshevik leader, as a man of action, what a communist always must be, he straightaway asks the question; what is the duty of the British working class, of the British people? What do their interests today demand? The answer is clear-cut. They demand "the closest and the most practical forms of co-operation with the Soviet Union."

The Churchill and Roosevelt governments had promised all-out aid to the Soviet Union. Stalin in his first speech had recognised its great significance. Comrade Pollitt and the British communist Party at once grasped the big shift that marks the entire world situation. The picture is no longer that of two mighty imperialist combinations battling against each other for world domination, while the Soviet Union stands natural, though in constant danger. One of the mighty imperialist blocs has now suddenly thrown the

full weight of its armed might against the USSR, the Socialist Fatherland of all the workers, against the staunch ally of all the oppressed peoples of the world. The other imperialist bloc was lining up with the Soviet Union.

What mattered was not the motives of imperialist and fascist rulers. What mattered was the grim reality that one action of world imperialism has foully, treacherously fallen upon the only workers' state. What mattered was the naked fact that the other powerful section of world imperialism was lining up with the Soviet Union. What was needed urgently and immediately was not "historical explanations" of how the situation came about. What was needed was not speculation as to the motives of Churchill and Roosevelt and the future. What was needed was a clear and decisive lead for action which corresponded to the urgent interests of the British workers, of the British people.

### **British Communist Line of Action**

Hitler fascism had become the main aggressor. Hitler fascism had once again become as in the days when we were struggling for a world front against fascism and war, the main enemy of humanity. The main task of progressive peoples of all over the world had become "closest and the most practical forms of co-operation with the Soviet Union". What was then to be our line of action? What must guide and govern our attitude to the new situation?

Comrade Pollitt answered the question for the British Party thus :—

"In this situation there is only one consideration which governs our attitude; those who are for the defeat of Hitler and those who openly or covertly endeavour to sabotage the achievement of the victory of the British and Soviet people over Hitler. *THAT IS WHY WE FIGHT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNITED NATIONAL FRONT OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE FOR HITLER'S DEFEAT*"

In other words, Pollitt and the C.P.G.B. are basing their line of action not only on the clear distinction between the imperialist bloc of fascism that has attacked the Soviet Union, and the other

imperialist powers which are now lining up with it, but also on the distinction which has to be made in Britain itself between those who would vigorously pursue the fight against Hitler and those who would sabotage it. Pollitt's call to the party is to unite, and mobilise the entire people for the victory of the Soviet and the British people for the victory over fascism, through practical activity and initiative.

### **Isolate the Main Enemy**

This consideration determines their attitude to the Churchill Government. With cold-blooded realism, the British Communist Party realises that its immediate main task is the intensification of the peoples' war which has now become a fact, and to win it. The immediate task of the British Communists was NOT the fight for a peoples' government because that would be a straight fight against the Churchill Government. The main and immediate task now was not to overthrow the Churchill Government, which was pledged to aid the Soviet Union, but to concentrate on the strategic task of cleaning out all those from the Government posts who were friends of fascists and who hindered in various ways the quick and effective mobilisation of resources, and production for victory.

It is just here that our explanation of the British Communist policy went wide off the mark. We said that the British Communist Party's fight "to organise production for victory", which we correctly pointed out, included the fight for just wages and rates, and for the preservation of the right to striki, was at the same time the fight for a peoples government. It was not. We were attributing our un-Bolshevik phrasemongering to our British comrades. They were not bothered about the gibes of disruptors and do-nothings who would now turn round and say : "Oh, the Communists have again changed their policy. They have given up the fight for peoples' government and are trooping into Churchill's camp". They were now concentrating all their forces in the strategic sphere of production in the factories and workshops. They were mobilising the workers through the shop stewards' movement they had organised in 1940, to fight against all hindrances to raising production, against pro-fascist owners who sabotaged production against profit-hunters who lowered the standards of living and wages of workers. They

were fighting for equal distribution of food and better ARP protection for all people

### **Meaning of United National Front in Britain**

What was the source of our wrong understanding of the British Communist policy? The source of our mistake was that we had not grasped the big and the decisive change which the new situation had meant. We missed the central core of the matter — the Hitler Government on the one hand and the Churchill and the Roosevelt governments on the other, could no longer be treated on the same footing in the eyes of the progressive peoples of the world as in the imperialist phase of the war. The one was the main aggressor, the treacherous enemy of the Soviet Union, and, therefore, of the mankind, while the other two though imperialist, were friends and allies of the Soviet Union. The immediate task of the British proletariat now was not fight to overthrow the Churchill Government which was an ally of the international proletariat, for that would split the world front of the progressive forces. The urgent task was to develop such powerful initiative of the workers in factories for production, such powerful will of the people to mobilise all England's resources for the great and decisive battle of humanity that all pro-fascist vacillation of the Churchill Government would be shaken off.

It was not a question of supporting the Churchill Government as the Labour Party leadership does, leaving the entire initiative in the hands of the Government; to do that was to relinquish the fight against the pro-fascist disruptors, fight for developing peoples' effort and will for the war. It was also not a question of supporting it with reservations while seeking to undermine it as we suggested in our explanation, in our literature before. The point was to develop peoples' democratic initiative and anger against the elements behind the Government who were responsible for waste and disorganisation in production, for curtailment of civil liberties in England, for worsening the standard of living of the workers for bad ARP and food distribution arrangements and for the continued enslavement of India.

## **Democratic Initiative**

What does Pollitt mean when he says: develop the *Democratic* initiative and activity for these demands? It means this that the fight for these demands is developed, not as a pressure to dislodge the Churchill government but as a pressure to force it implement fully its pledge, to render effective and quick aid to the Soviet, the pledge to win the war against fascism. For the achievement of these demands is now a necessary condition to develop the maximum effort of the people to win the war. In other words, again the fight is to isolate the most rotten and reactionary elements in the British ruling class who are hindering the peoples' effort for victory by refusing these demands. This democratic effort is possible in England, because the entire proletariat and the progressive peoples of England are united on the issue of winning the war against Hitler-fascism, of rendering effective aid to the Soviet.

We have sketched in the foregoing how we wrongly understood and explained the policy our British comrades are pursuing and how Com. Pollit puts us right. We missed the real meaning of the "Reuter" messages about the British policy because we were off the track on the main issue itself. This is where the British C. P. and Comrade Pollitt correct us. We of the Polit-Bureau went on making the pedantic formulation that with Hitler's attack upon the USSR, the war entered into a new stage when it was being transformed from an imperialist war into an all-round people's revolutionary war. We did not see the plain blunt fact that with the new re-alignment of world imperialist forces vis-a-vis the Soviet Union the war as a whole ceased to be an imperialist war but was in fact an all-peoples' war against the main aggressor and enemy of humanity—Hitler-fascism. That and no other was the significance of the new stage.

We went in for long-drawn historic explanations, speculations and for deal of phrasemongering but did not see the wood for the trees. We failed to see that our Party, the party of the most progressive and revolutionary class in the Indian society had to take the initiative in reformulating the immediate tasks of the Indian people in the context of the new situation. We had to formulate

the demands and the objective of our immediate practical national struggle not in the context of a non-existent imperialist war but in the context of an all-peoples' war against Hitler-fascism, headed by the Soviet Union and by the progressive peoples of Britain and America.

### **Bourgeois-Nationalism**

Why did we go wrong? We went wrong because our blind bourgeois-nationalist hatred of British imperialist Government prevented us from grasping the simple fact that Government was now in the same progressive camp with the Soviet Union and ranged against Hitler fascism.

It dimmed our Marxism-Leninism for a time and we were unable to see that this fact had to be recognised and made use of for the very purpose of the liberation of our people from the national enemy. The British Government was in the progressive front because it was reduced to such straits by the dire crisis of imperialism that it had to renounce its feud with the class enemy, the Soviet Union, and shake hands with it. But it was not progressive enough to see that the full and final victory of that front over Hitler-fascism demanded the freedom of India and her voluntary participation in the war. That is just the reason why the progressive Indian people and the Communist Party of India have to take the initiative in their own hand to be in that front, to put forward and to fight for the demand that the Indian people achieve that freedom which would enable them to freely and voluntarily mobilise their entire resources for the all-peoples war. Such a fight and such a demand corresponded not only with the interests of rendering practical aid to the Soviet Union and with the proletarian internationalism of our Party.

### **What Internationalism Demands**

If ever our struggle for national freedom was a part of the liberation struggle, of the progressive peoples of the world, headed by the Soviet Union, it is so today. This recognition of the unity of our struggle with the titanic battle now going on for the future of humanity requires not spinning phrases such as; we shall only participate in the struggle as a free nation, but something concrete and practical. It is not a question of our promising that we shall

be participating in the all-peoples' war when we would be independent but immediately taking the initiative for uniting the people for a struggle for such minimum demands as will enable India and the Indian people to throw in the full weight of their resources and manpower in this war. It must be clear to the meanest intelligence that a decisive victory over Hitler-fascism won by the joint forces led by the Soviet-British and American people cannot but transform the world, cannot but pave the way for the complete liberation of the Indian people as well as other oppressed peoples of the world. But it requires the active and voluntary participation of the Indian people in that war. The reactionary circles of the British ruling class are making that active co-operation impossible by denying us the very elements of democratic liberties and popular government.

### **What Our New Line Should Be**

What then is the duty of the Indian people in this historic hour of human destiny? What policy must the Indian Communist Party adopt towards the British Government and towards the present war effort? Firstly, it is quite clear that fight or non-co-operation against even the present government's war effort just because its war effort has no place now in our struggle for freedom. We must clearly recognise that the individual civil disobedience of the National Congress, symbolic as it was, has now lost even the little moral value it had when it was directed against the imperialist war. Secondly the Communist Party must take the initiative to unite all the progressive forces in the country to demand and fight for such minimum demands to be won from imperialism as are necessary to make the voluntary organisation of the resources and man-power of India for throwing India's full weight for the victory of the all-peoples' war. Thirdly, such minimum demands must include :

(a) recognition of India's right to independence.

(b) establishment of democratic liberties and release of all political prisoners.

(c) the transfer of power to popular representatives which would enable them to reorganise the resources and economic life of the country guaranteeing the urgent demands of the people—workers



and peasants—the shifting of the war burdens to the rich and the all round industrialisation of the country. They should be made into a properly drawn-up National Charter of demands such as to obtain support from the National Congress, the Trade Unions, the Kisan Sabhas and the Muslim League. This Charter should be the basis of a mass struggle for demanding its acceptance by the British Government in the interest of unfolding India's voluntary war-effort to secure victory in the war against Hitler-fascism.

Such is the line which the Communist Party of India must now put forward. It corresponds with the immediate interests of the Indian people and of their struggle for complete independence. It corresponds with our tasks in the common struggle of all the progressive peoples for the final annihilation of Hitler-fascism. For that victory won, in alliance with the Great Soviet Union, will pave our way to complete liberation.

This is what these documents from our brother-party teach us. They have shown us the mistake we have committed. We have to correct it and march forward to shape the future of our people by practical action. More exhaustive documents on the new line will follow in the succeeding Party Letters.

P. L. 54. p. 11.

### **Omission**

The following paragraphs omitted from between PAGES 4 and 5 should be read in that context: i.e., as the continuation of page 4.

“Only the most resolute drive in the workshops can end these obstructive practices and can expose those who are responsible for their perpetuation as enemies of the people.

Every hold-up, bottle-neck and waste must be dragged into the light of day and exposed. All the facts must be communicated to the trade unions, the Government departments and Members of Parliament.

*THIS IS WHERE THE SHOP STEWARDS AND FACTORY ORGANISATION OF THE WORKERS, WITH THE CORRESPONDING TRADE UNION ORGANISATION IN ALL INDUSTRIES, CAN PERFORM AN INESTIMABLE*

**SERVICE TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE. THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO KNOW, BECAUSE THEY ARE ON THE SPOT, OF EVERY CASE OF WASTE, OBSTRUCTION AND HOLD-UP, AND THEY CAN EXPOSE SUCH SCANDALS AND LEAD THE FIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO END THEM.'**

**Extracts from Comrade Stalin's speech to the Moscow Soviet on 6th November.**

**"Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union have united in a single camp and set themselves the task of routing the Nazi imperialists and their invading armies. A modern war is a war of machines, a war to be won by one who has overwhelming superiority in the output of machines. If the production of machines in the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union is combined, then we will acquire at least three-fold superiority in machines as compared with Germany. This is one of the fundamental reasons for the inevitable doom of predatory Nazi Imperialism**

**"The recent three-Power conference in Moscow with the participation of the representative of Great Britain, Lord Beaverbrook, and the representative of the United States, Mr Harriman, decided to give our country systematic help in tanks and aircraft. As is known, we have already begun to receive tanks and aeroplanes on the basis of this decision. Even earlier, Great Britain assured a supply to our country of materials in which we are deficient, such as aluminum, lead, tin, nickel and rubber. If to this is added the fact that a few days ago the United States decided to grant the Soviet Government a loan of one million dollars, *WE MAY SAY WITH CERTAINTY THAT THE COALITION OF THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND THE SOVIET UNIONS IS A REAL THING WHICH IS GROWING AND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR COMMON CAUSE.. LIBERATION. (Loud and prolonged applause). THESE ARE FACTORS DETERMINING THE INEVITABLE DESTRUCTION OF NAZI IMPERIALISM.***

**"All honest people must support the army of our country, of Great Britain and the United States as champions of liberation, not only in Europe but in Asia, in Iran for instance. The subjugated peoples of the world came to us for help. We must do all in our power to help them and then let them live a life of complete liberty**

in their homeland as they want to. To do that we must break the life of the German war machine"

Comrade Stalin added that it was necessary for the people of the U. S. S. R., to organise themselves as one single fighting camp for the destruction of the Germany army

"Our conference will go down in history in connection with the glorious struggle against Hitler. What is necessary is not only to defeat the Hitlerites, but to put an end for all time to this order of criminal band of enslaver. To achieve this it is necessary to destroy these adventurers.

"The political significance of this conference is this, that it shows what bitter contempt there is for Hitler, against whom a powerful group of the freedom loving nations of the world have united. Hitler has never yet encountered such a powerful force of anti-Fascist Front. Now at last, an anti-Fascist front has been formed which will destroy Hitler and liberate all those who have been enslaved by him."

From MOLOTOV'S speech before  
The Moscow Conference, on  
September 1, 1941

# INDIA AND FREEDOM

Clemens Dutt

The decision of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress to threaten a new movement of mass civil disobedience to enforce the demand for the withdrawal of British political power from India is a disastrous step for the fate of India in a critical situation. It is also a measure of the disastrous failure to establish India as an equal partner in the world-wide struggle of the free peoples against Fascism. It is a decision which in its operation inevitably puts the Indian people into the position of dissociating themselves from a world cause on which the freedom of all peoples from Fascist tyranny and imperialist subjection, and their own freedom and independence also, ultimately depends.

At this moment, when the enemy already stands at the gates of India, when battles decisive for the future of the world are developing. India has a central part to play in the world front against Fascism. By its geographical situation, its strategic significance, its actual and potential resources in man-power and material, it occupies a key-position of vital significance, not only for Asia but for every front of the allied nations.

It is impossible for us here to wash our hands of the situation that has been created. The disastrous possibilities inherent in the decision of the Indian National Congress makes it the more urgent and imperative to carry forward the campaign here for a new approach on the basis of the establishment of a national government in India which will mobilise the Indian people for the defence of India and full participation in the war.

It may be urged that there can be no question of a new approach because the ground has already been fully explored by Sir Stafford Cripps in his visit to India. A leading article in 'The Times' (July 15, 1942) says of this visit: "The offer we made is comprehensive

and complete and in principle leaves nothing over that it is within our power to give."

The picture is presented of Sir Stafford Cripps arriving with a new and generous offer which was not taken advantage of because communal and sectional rivalries prevented its acceptance and because the major Indian political body, the Indian National Congress, demanded an impossible alteration of the constitution which would in effect give full independence immediately and the Congress a monopoly of power.

The central fact about the Cripps mission is that the offer he conveyed consisted only of (a) a promise of Dominion Status after the war, described by Mr. Gandhi as "a post-dated cheque on a bank which is already crashing," and (b) a vague paragraph on the co-operation of the peoples of India with the government in the defence of India which boiled down in the negotiations to a proposal for the further enlargement of the Viceroy's Executive Council to include an Indian defence minister with a limited province and very restricted powers.

It is desirable to reproduce the text of this proposal as given in the document.

*During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the councils of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations.*

The attempt is made to portray this as the offer of a "National Government." A survey of the Cripps mission in *The Times* (July 4, 1942) states: "For the immediate purpose of associating India fully with the war it proposed the establishment of a National Government." Fundamental changes were ruled out, but "it was made clear that the term 'National Government' would be interpreted

in the most liberal spirit." But the declaration says nothing about a National Government. It says that responsibility for the defence of India must remain in British hands. And Sir Stafford Cripps emphasised in his speech in the House of Commons: "I had from the outset made it clear that it was not possible to make any constitutional changes except of the most insignificant kind"

It is impossible, therefore, not to recognise that the Cripps proposals, far from ushering in a new epoch, were a continuation of the same die-hard imperialist policy expressed in the so-called "August offer" made by the Secretary of State for India, L S Amery, in August 1940, which was in fact couched in very similar terms and was described by Jawaharlal Nehru as an "insult to India."

Mr. Amery has just published a collection of his speeches of the last two years,\* full of simple faith in the British mission of Empire ("our Empire in India just grew ... for the simple reason that it was acceptable to the people of India") (p.112) and it can be seen from it how correctly he summed up the Cripps mission in his speech in Parliament on April 28, 1942, as "the epilogue of an old chapter."

This is borne out also by the recently published survey of the Cripps mission made by Professor Coupland.† This popular statement of the Government's case has a note opposite the contents "This book is produced in complete conformity with the authorised economy standards." Economy seems to have been exercised in producing the arguments of the other side, but one thing the author has to admit and that is: "In principle, in fact, the Draft Declaration went no further than the 'August Offer'" (p.30). He explains, however, that it was "an advance on the Offer" The auctioneering terminology suggests that the Government's increased bid was only the minimal coin of the realm, but Mr. Coupland points out: "It was more concrete and constructive. It elucidated the meaning of Dominion status."

Mr. Coupland explains at some length the impossibility of transferring the Indian Civil Service and Police to Indian hands

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\* *India and Freedom*. By L. S. Amery. Oxford University Press, 3s6d

† *The Cripps Mission*. By R. Coupland, Oxford University Press.

“To transform their status now... is out of the question,” he says bluntly (p 58). One wonders whether the Japanese would take that view. This negative attitude of non possumus is the same sterile conservatism that refused to face the political problems of the defence of Singapore, Java and Burma.

The failure of the Cripps missions was not due to any unwillingness to negotiate on the part of the Indian nationalist leaders. It would not have been unnatural if Nehru and others who had been so long in prison had adopted a strictly “Sinn Fein” attitude and turned a blind eye to international problems. On the contrary, the Indian National Congress has always been conscious of its international responsibility and has repeatedly expressed the readiness of the Indian people to co-operate with other freedom-loving peoples against Fascism and aggression. Mr. Brailsford says, “The word that Indians were waiting to hear, the key-word ‘independence,’ should have been used” (New Statesman, May 18, 1942). But it is not a question of words. The Draft declaration could have replaced the word Dominion Status by the word independence and it would not have made a jot of difference. What is needed is a policy which puts the Indian people in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom. As the Congress resolution says, “what is most wanting is the enthusiastic response of the people, which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defence.”

In spite, therefore, of Mr. Coupland's conclusion that “the communal problem, and not her relations with Britain, is India's major problem,” the central point is that no new approach was made to the people of India while at the same time the hard fact remains that the defence of India is not militarily possible without winning the co-operation of the Indian people.

The Cripps mission was the last effort on the lines of the old policy. It is becoming realised that it belongs to a past period. The new period demands something more than only “the most insignificant” constitutional changes. The Viceroy's Council has been enlarged from 12 to 15 members, without the addition of a single representative of any section of popular political opinion. A defence

minister has been created of whom the gibe runs in India that he will have charge of canteens and latrines for the war effort.

There is a note of complacency in recent Government pronouncements on India which is entirely at variance with the facts. The flow of recruits into the Indian Army is boosted as an outstanding achievement. Satisfaction is expressed that the war effort in India is "as good as in the last war." This is the practical realisation of the policy enunciated by Lord Halifax when he helped to torpedo the Cripps negotiations by declaring that if India's leaders rejected the opportunity offered them "we shall, I do not doubt, continue to have the co-operation and good will of millions of Indians not less devoted than the accredited leaders to the cause of Indian freedom." This attitude means ignoring the whole urgency of the problems arising from the new conditions of total war, which can only be solved by the full participation of the whole people. Instead of a new approach, the bureaucratic mind finds satisfaction in a situation where its measures for defence can be imposed from above.

But the failure to find a basis for making use of popular initiative in resisting aggression and in developing the vast potential resources of India, so that the country can play its full part in the anti-Fascist front, can only spell disaster. It is only necessary to contrast what has been achieved in China under a National Government to realise the colossal failure implied by a war effort in India which is only equal to that of the last war. China is recognised as an equal partner among the allied nations. United under their own government, her people have been able to display a military strength which has kept the Japanese armies at bay for five years and to achieve an unprecedented development of national resources and culture.

There is no doubt that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek spoke with a full realisation of the value of a free India not only to China, but to the world front against Fascism, when he appealed to Britain during his visit to India; "I sincerely hope and I confidently believe that Great Britain, without waiting for any demands on the part of the peoples of India, will as speedily as possible give them real political power." That message could leave no doubt as to his attitude towards the central problem in India.

Gandhi has used the situation created by the rebuff administered to Indian aspirations to induce the Indian National Congress to adopt



a policy which, in effect, dissociates it altogether from the struggle of the allied nations. Its resolution is almost wholly a pathetic appeal to Britain "to make India a willing partner in the joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and the peoples of the world," but ends by indicating that a non-violent movement of resistance to British rule led by Gandhi is the only alternative. But the Indian masses are not pacifist, nor are they indifferent to the cause for which the peoples of China and the Soviet Union, to name but two, are fighting. They are against a sterile policy which would leave them passive spectators while the fate of the world is being decided. The resolutions of working class, Trade Union and student's organisations, the demonstrations that were held on June 22, the anniversary of the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, afford unmistakable evidence of their readiness to co-operate actively in the war against Fascism.

In Spite, therefore, of the resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the Congress, it becomes the more important to carry forward the campaign here to insist that India should be allowed its own government for organising its own defence, and that no section should be allowed to stand in the way of the millions in India co-operating with the free peoples of the world. It is a responsibility of the Labour movement in Britain to press the full application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter to India, the release of political prisoners,\* (many thousands of whom are still in prison for their activity in the working-class, the peasant, and the anti-Fascist movement) and the recognition of a free India, under its own national government, as an ally not less important than China or the Soviet Union.

The initiative taken by the India League in this country in organising a ballot in factories and among trade unionists on the subject of a national government for India is helping to bring the issue into prominence and already showing a ten to one majority in London alone for this policy. If the former hostile policy towards the Soviet Union could be reversed, so can also the policy of hostility to Indian aspirations, and with equally important results for the united strength of the free nations.

*\* This article was written before the announcement (July 23) of the removal of the ban on the Communist Party of India and the release from prison of a number of its members.*

## INDIA—WHAT MUST BE DONE

**Rajani Palme Dutt**

*It is from the standpoint of this urgent world situation that we need to judge the present grave crisis in India. At the moment of the supreme Axis attack throughout the world, when the fortunes of the United Nations are swaying in the balance, a nation of four hundred millions, one-fifth of humanity, has been treated as an enemy for the crime of demanding to be an ally. This is the fantastic but unfortunately true epitome of the Indian situation.* When all the charges and criticisms in the world have been laid against the Congress leadership and tactics, the fact remains that the Congress was asking for the recognition of a free India as an ally of the United Nations; and this demand, because it was accompanied with the threat of civil disobedience in the event of refusal, has been met with police cells, lathi charges, whipping ordinances and firing squads. To have reached such a position represents a bankruptcy of statesmanship on the part of the ruling Power which parallels the worst military fiascoes of the war. We cannot be satisfied with such a position. The situation in India is serious, but not irreparable. But we need to act quickly if we are to remedy it in time.

The war is indivisible, and the front in India cannot be separated from the front in Europe—or the absence of the front in Europe. While no Second Front has yet been established in Europe, a new type of front has been established by our rulers—not in Europe, but in India. Not against Fascism, but against the enemies of Fascism. The arms that have not been used against the Fascist enemy have been used against unarmed popular crowds in India who were demanding the right of their nation to be recognised as an equal ally of the United Nations for the war against Fascism. The same authorities who have been so lax and lenient with pro-

Fascist agitators in Britain have been swift to incarcerate anti-Fascist agitators in India. With one hand they are releasing daily more Fascists and Mosleyites from the prisons in Britain, with the other they are throwing anti-Fascists, tried and sincere leaders of the international anti-Fascist fight like Nehru, into prison in India. This is an intolerable situation, too closely recalling the policies of a Daladier, which led to evil consequences in France.

Once again reactionary policy plays straight into the hand of Fascism. The two halves of reactionary policy, in respect of Europe and in respect of India, fit one another like the two hands of a pair of gloves. It is precisely the reactionary opponents of the Second front and their press organs who are the most vocal to applaud and gloat over the "strong hand" in India, and they will no doubt be delighted to use the argument of the conflict in India as a further demonstration of the impossibility of the Second front in Europe. It cannot fail to be observed that the very sudden precipitation of the conflict in India (taking completely by surprise the Congress, which had no plans ready and was preparing to negotiate) coincided with the Moscow Conference, in a way which might be expected to have an unfavourable bearing on these crucial negotiations. With the later months of the year the threat of Japan will reach its sharpest point. In this critical situation, with the resources of the United Nations strained in every sphere, with the need of every ally, to thrust away the offer of co-operation of the great popular national forces of India and turn them to hostility, is not strategy, but madness. Or, rather, if it is strategy, it is the strategy of the war of reaction against the popular movement, and not of the war of the peoples against fascism.

The opening of crisis and conflict in India is equivalent to a major military defeat for the United Nations and a victory for the Axis. With Fascism at the gates of India, threatening directly to conquer India and to utilise India for its aims of world domination, we are faced with a situation in which there is internal crisis and conflict in India, division between rulers and ruled, arrests of the principal and best known popular leaders, sporadic disorder and police firing—a conflict that must be watched with grim satisfaction by the Japanese generals on the frontiers or the Axis propagandists.

in Berlin. It is to-day universally admitted by all observers that the loss of Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, Java, Borneo and the speedy advance of the Japanese in these regions was above all due to the lack of co-operation between the Governments and the peoples. Must this experience be repeated on a yet vaster canvas in India, with deadly consequences for the whole world fight against Fascism? This is what we must strain every nerve to prevent. We cannot afford to thrust aside four hundred million potential allies and turn them into enemies. We cannot afford to provoke a needless conflict in India for the benefit of Fascism.

*For this conflict in India is needless, unjustifiable, indefensible. It is a conflict between opponents of Fascism, between two nations who are equally opposed to Fascism. This is the heart of the problem of the present Indian situation. The Manchester Guardian justly commented in its leader on the morrow of the arrests on August 10:—*

*If both sides have the same sincere intentions with regard to India's freedom and to her due place as an active combatant against the aggressor, it is ridiculous that we should be facing a conflict in which the common aims of India and the Allies will be more and more forgotten.*

Significant also was the comment of *The Times* editorial on August 12 :—

*The political situation will not remain static and present Indian support for Government policy is combined with the demand for more active Indian participation in the conduct of affairs. This is a reasonable, constructive and welcome demand. The needs of war, no less than the interests of unity, demand a closing of the ranks among all who are prepared to work actively in partnership for the defence of India, for the cause of the United Nations, and for the full attainment of national self-government, while standing resolute against a policy of disorder and disruption. But to implement such a policy, political realism will require negotiations with the National Congress, no less than with other political sections and leaders.*

The Indian people are no allies of Fascism. They passionately desire national freedom and have struggled for it for decades with

signal self sacrifice, heroism and solidarity, in the course of which they have built up through their National Congress a popular movement of millions without parallel in the world—the greatest national movement in the world next to the Chinese, and our natural ally in the fight against Fascism. Precisely because they stand for freedom, they are opposed to Fascism. With the exception of an insignificant minority represented by Bose in Berlin, they no less passionately hate Fascism; their sympathies are with the Soviet people, with the Chinese people, and therefore with the cause of the United Nations. Their leaders have understood and proclaimed, and have consistently taught their followers, with breadth of international outlook rare in a purely national movement, that the cause of Indian freedom is bound up with world freedom and with world victory over Fascism. For the past ten years they have played their part in the vanguard of the international anti-Fascist front, for China, for Abyssinia, for Spain, at a time when many of those who to-day in the places of power in Britain dare to denounce them for failing to join up in the fight against Fascism were themselves praising and helping Fascism and betraying China, Abyssinia and Spain. India is far more deeply and sincerely anti-Fascist than many National Government Ministers in Britain. Nor is the demand of the Indian National Congress to-day an impossibilist or extremist demand, striving to take advantage of the dilemmas of British imperialism for a sectional national gain without regard to world issues or consequences. Theirs is no “Sinn Fein” (“Ourselves Alone”) policy. They know very well that such exclusive national blindness would be equivalent to national suicide in the present world situation, when the fate of every nation is thrown on to the anvil of the world battle. On the contrary, it is precisely because they wish to play their full part in the world battle against Fascism, with the unleashed strength of a confident and rising nation, that they strain against the outworn bureaucratic shackles of a system which is not only anti-national and anti-democratic, but also singularly anti-quoted and incompetent (the days of the Mesopotamia Commission are not over, but rather intensified, only there are to-day no Commissions), and under which they feel no possibility of the nation playing a worthy part in the struggle.

*Therefore they demand a National Government not in opposition to the interests of the struggle of the United Nations but in order to fulfil their part in that struggle by mobilising the full strength of the Indian nation, its man-power, and resources on a scale far exceeding anything at present attempted and as only a popular Government enjoying the confidence of the nation can do. Therefore they find infuriating the tepid Crippsian discussions and bland patronising "offers" of hypothetical post-war constitutions, when their heart and soul is in the present struggle which they know will determine the fate of India and the world and when the only demand which matters to-day, the demand for a National Government to mobilise India's participation in the present struggle, is steadfastly refused. Not to understand that this profoundly international and anti-Fascist outlook indissolubly linked with Indian national patriotism, is the burning impulse which drives such leaders as Nehru (however much we may disagree with the desperate expedient of civil disobedience as a weapon to attain these ends) is not to understand the beginning of the Indian problem. The demand of the Indian National Congress to-day is for the recognition of a free India as an ally of the United Nations to mobilise the armed resistance of their people against Fascist aggression under a popular Government of their own leaders in whom they have confidence, but fully accepting the supreme military leadership and command of the United Nations. What sincere democrat or supporter of victory over Fascism could oppose such a demand?*

Yet, with all the cards stacked against Fascism in India and on the side of the United Nations, with ninety per cent of articulate political opinion eager to fight on the side of the United Nations, the policy of the British Government in India has succeeded in performing the brilliant feat of running the bulk of this popular movement and feeling into bitter hostility or even active resistance. What are we to think of a policy which produces such fruits? The most outstanding military fiascos of the war can hardly compare with such a political fiasco. What are we to think of a policy by which a Nehru, a symbol of international anti-Fascism finds himself against his will thrust into a position in which he appears

lined up in a front of struggle objectively hindering the war effort of the United Nations against Fascism and opposed to the front of the United Nations as represented by the British Government in India. How has this tragic situation come about?

The significance of the transformation of the war in June, 1941, was well understood by the Indian national movement. The release of the principal Congress leaders opened the possibility of a new orientation and the advance to a basis of co-operation. The Bardoli resolution of the National Congress in December, 1941, declared for the principle of armed resistance to the Axis as an ally of the United Nations, provided India could mobilise under a National Government. Gandhi passed out of the leadership because of his disagreement with this resolution and the abandonment of non-violence. *The Times of India* Commented: "*The resolution (of Congress) reopens the door to agreement with the British Government, thereby giving a valuable lead which we hope will be reciprocated*". The way was open, given only a minimum of statesmanship and favourable response from the side of Britain. This favourable opening was further assisted by the visit in February, 1942, of Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek to India, with his simultaneous public appeal to India and to Britain. To India he said:—

*The present international situation divides the world into two camps of aggression and anti-aggression. All those who oppose aggression and are striving for the freedom of their country and mankind should join the anti-aggression camp.*

There is no middle course.

To Britain he said:—

*I sincerely hope and I confidently believe that our ally Great Britain, without waiting for any demands on the part of the people of India, will as speedily as possible give them real political power, so that they may be in a position further to develop their material and spiritual strength and thus realise that their participation in the war is not merely an aid to the anti-aggression nations for the securing of victory, but also a turning-point in their struggle for India's freedom. From an objective point of*

*view I am convinced that this would be the wisest policy, which will redound to the credit of the British Empire.*

It will be noted that he urged "real political power" for the Indian people to enable them to strengthen their participation in the war, i.e., as a war measure, not as a post-war promise. This viewpoint corresponds to that of the Indian national movement, and is the crux of the present controversy.

Similarly, the Australian Minister for External Affairs expressed the same viewpoint in February, 1942, urging self-government for India now during the war in order to strengthen Indian participation in the war :-

*We sympathise with the aspirations of the Indian people to become one of the self-governing nations, and as such to take part in the defence of the Allied cause in Asia.*

(Dr. H.V. Evatt, Australian Commonwealth Minister for External Affairs, speech in the Australian Parliament, February 27, 1942.)

There is reason to believe that American official channels also made representations to the British Government, urging the application of the Atlantic Charter to India. It is important to recognise this role of American-Australian-Chinese pressure in order to understand the context of the Indian national demand and the relative isolation within the United Nations of the British official viewpoint which still refuses to consider a responsible National Government in India during the war. By the spring of 1942 a favourable situation had thus been created. The ball was at Britain's feet. If there was still reluctance and resistance from British official quarters, the arrival of the Japanese at Rangoon in March helped to supply the necessary impetus.

The Cripps Mission in April unfortunately destroyed this favourable position. It is vital to understand this crucial turning-point in recent political development in India, since the congratulatory haze of self-deception with which official propaganda in this country has endeavoured to cover up the failure has fostered illusions here, both as to the supposed magnanimity of the offer, or the beneficial effects of the contact, which are not helpful. The brutal truth needs to be faced that in relation to Indian opinion the Cripps Mission



did immeasurable harm; and all the worsening of the political situation and exacerbation of relations dates from it.

The Cripps Mission failed not primarily because of the highly dubious character of the post-war plan which it offered, not because of the political divisions in India which were only subsequently brought forward as a reason for failure. It failed because, under cover of the dubious post-war plan, it rejected out of hand and ruled out the one issue that mattered—the establishment of a responsible National Government now with effective powers for Indian participation in the war. This rejection, it was made clear, was independent of the agreement or disagreement of the various sections of Indian political opinion. The elaborate hypothetical post-war plan was only the window-dressing to cover the rejection of the one real present issue. This rejection ran counter to the entire range of Indian opinion, including the most moderate opinion. Not only the Congress, but every important Indian organisation turned down the Cripps proposals.

In the negotiations the Congress went to considerable lengths of concessions in the hope of reaching a positive settlement, offering to serve under a British Viceroy, provided they had real responsibility and powers, and to accept a British Commander-in Chief, not only for the control of military operations but as a member of the Cabinet. In vain. They were told that British power must remain absolute and dictatorial, that an Indian Minister of Defence might at the most control canteens and stationery. When they tried to negotiate, in order to narrow the margin of disagreement, they were told, "Take it or leave it." This "take it or leave it" attitude gave the impression that there was no real intention to negotiate, but rather to prepare the grounds for a future conflict. This impression was strengthened by the unfortunate speech of Lord Halifax on April 7, while the negotiations were still in progress, already anticipating failure and declaring that the British Government would in that event maintain power alone and that the Cripps Mission would have served its purpose in establishing an unanswerable case against future critics of British power in India.

Deterioration in the political situation rapidly followed. The British

Government declared that nothing more could be done. The National Congress, frustrated in its desire to co-operate, after a period of hesitancy and divided counsels, slid down the inclined plane towards non-co-operation. Leadership passed back into the hands of Gandhi, the pacifist evil genius of Indian politics. Serious anti-Fascist leaders and advocates of co-operation with the United Nations, like Nehru and Azad, passed into the wake of Gandhi and his dangerous proposals for a non-co-operation campaign. Unscrupulous reactionary propaganda at once seized on the characteristic utterances of Gandhi, advocating pacifism and appeasement to smear the whole national movement as capitulationist and ready to make peace with Japan, even though the personal viewpoints of Gandhi in respect of non-violence and appeasement had been explicitly repudiated by every official Congress statement and resolution. The bombshell publication of documents seized in a police raid in order to expose facts already well known from Gandhi's public articles illustrated this technique of preparation.

The Congress resolution on non-cooperation was put out in July and finally adopted on August 7 (against an opposition vote of 13, led by the Indian Communist Party, whose restoration of legal rights was a recognition of their growing influence and strength). This resolution reaffirmed sympathy for the United Nations and the demand for recognition of India as a free ally under a National Government for armed resistance to Fascism in co-operation with the United Nations, but added the threat of civil disobedience in the event of refusal. Reaction above had produced reaction below. To the fatal policy of the British Government was now added the fatal policy of the Congress, both leading to division in the face of the common enemy.

The anti-Fascist working-class sections of the national movement represented by the Indian Communist Party had from the outset put forward a clear and consistent line in relation to the war of liberation of the united peoples and the path forward of the Indian national movement to liberation through a positive response to the tasks and responsibilities raised by the war. This line will be found set out in the booklet "Forward to Freedom."

by P.C. Joshi. Secreatry of the Indian Communist party, published in India in February, 1942, and shortly to be reprinted in this country. They now set out their positive alternative proposals to non-co-operation in the present critical situation : to build up the united national front in India, including the unity of the Congress, the Moslem League and all other political sections on a common platform of resistance to Fascism ; on this basis to press the demand for a settlement and for a National Government for India; while pressing the just political demand, to co-operate wholeheartedly in the war effort and the mobilisation of the people; resolute resistance to all policies of non-co-operation as fatal to the interests of the Indian people. But with the existing embitterment of national feelling, and the reactionary refusal by Btirish ruling circles of the demand for a National Government, this policy was not yet able to win the support of the bulk of the national movement

No fighter for anti-Fascist unity could support a policy of non-co-operation, whatever the prvocation, in the war of the United Nations against Fascism, since this means division of the forces opposed to Fascism and could facilitate Fascist victory. But it is essential for sympathetic British opinion to understand how sincere Indian patriots and anti-Fascists, goaded and provoked by the refusal of their resonable demands and unable to see the possibility of the positive alternative policy which the Indian Communist Party advocated, fell into the fatal trap of adopting the policy of non-co-operation, believing it to be their only weapon and their only way to the free mobilisation of the people for the establishment of a National Government and effective defence against Fascism—although, in fact, it could only mean division before Fascism, suicidal to the interests of Indian freedom. While we must deplore this failure of leadership, we cannot but recognise that the heaviest responsibility rests with the reactionary policy which refused India's just demands and thus provoked such an outcome.

At the last the Congress showed every desire to reach a settlement and to negotiate. The resolution was revised to stress the desire for a practical settlement and for co-operation in armed resistance to Fascism. The final speeches of Gandhi and Nehru stressed the

desire to negotiate. Nehru stated in his final reply to the debate : "The resolution is not a threat; it is an invitation and an explanation; it is an offer of co-operation". Gandhi's subsequently published letter to Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek in July made clear that he "will take no hasty action, and whatever action is taken will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China : I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority." It was explained that the first step would be a letter to the Viceroy proposing negotiations before there would be any question of launching any action. The letter was begun immediately after the close of the Congress Committee, but was apparently never allowed to be finished. Within a few hours the wholesale arrests followed, which in turn provoked civil conflict and some sporadic disorders, disowned by the Congress, and met by active repression with widespread police and military action.

The arrests precipitated the open conflict and disorders, and in this way fulfilled the role of a direct provocation, almost as if to prevent the offered negotiations. It is difficult to see how this deliberate decision for a policy of repression in preference to negotiations can be regarded as justified by the situation. Once the disorders began, it was inevitable that the Government should take action against them. But it was the arrests which provoked the disorders, not the disorders which provoked the arrests. At the moment of the arrests, at the close of the Congress Committee session, there was no such immediate urgency to justify the argument of the supposed imperative necessity to precipitate the conflict. No order for civil disobedience had been given. There were obviously no plans of action ready. The aim of the Congress was manifestly to negotiate. The disorders which were provoked by the arrests were disowned by the Congress and condemned by the Congress press. It is not easy to escape the impression that the precipitation of the conflict in this way was dictated by reactionary interests in ruling circles which were more concerned to utilise a favourable tactical opportunity for crushing the Congress and the popular movement in India than in winning Indian co-operation against Japan.

We need now to do all in our power to remedy this dangerous situation. What must be done is clear. We must press for the immediate reopening of negotiations, equally with the Congress and with all political sections and leaders in India, with a view to the speediest establishment of a provisional popular Government in India, representative of all political sections and leaders willing to co-operate in the common task of armed resistance to Fascist aggression as an ally of the United Nations. This is the plain common-sense response to the present urgent situation, and the indispensable basis on which we must strive to end the crisis and establish that co-operation which is equally essential in the interests of India, of Britain and of all the United Nations

The argument that such a coalition National Government is impossible to establish because of the divisions of the different political sections and groupings in India ignores the fact that the attempt has not been made. This negative prediction of failure as a justification for not making the attempt perpetuates the very obstacle it professes to deplore. For present purposes we need not concern ourselves with the representative of unrepresentative character of the various minority and splinter groupings and organisations, without figures of membership or electoral support, which have been inflated and publicised to an artificial importance by the conditions of foreign rule and special encouragement and protection of their anti-national sectionalism ("To emphasise the essential importance of Hindu-Moslem agreement does not imply, as Nationalists assert, that the British are pursuing a policy of divide and rule. The divisions exist, and British rule is certain as long as they do"—*The Times*, January 31, 1941). In the present national crisis the national movement must be prepared to make far-reaching concessions for the sake of national unity; and the Congress leaders have shown understanding of this, just as the most serious and responsible representatives of other sections have shown similar understanding.

But so long as a National Government is refused, and British absolute power is maintained, then inevitably the maximum intransigence of every sectional and splinter grouping and organisation is encouraged, because every such organisation looks

to the paramount Power to protect its sectional claims, and finds in these, instead of an consideration for the well-being of India, the sole reason for its political existence. As soon as this artificial sustaining prop is removed, normal political considerations hold sway as in other countries, and common danger, common national need and common emergency becomes the cement which binds together national unity. So long as the threat of civil disobedience by the National Congress is met with instant drastic repression by the Government, while the parallel threat of "revolt" made officially by the leader of the Moslem League in February if their claims are not conceded and sustained is met with instant declarations from official quarters that in that case no course must be pursued which would provoke such a menacing revolt and possibility of civil war, it is obvious that this method of rule is perpetuating division. But if once the firm policy of the establishment of a responsible National Government is definitively adopted, with invitation to participate to every political section and leadership willing to co-operate in the common effort, but with no right to any grouping to hold up the scheme by its veto, if it chooses voluntarily to exclude itself, the imagined insurmountable obstacles will be possible to overcome, and a Government of representative men of good will from all political sections can be established with the enthusiastic support of the Indian Nation. This is the path of statesmanship and of serious mobilisation of India against Fascism.

There is reason to believe that such a solution has been strongly urged from official quarters on behalf of the American, Chinese and Australian Governments. We have already noted the explicit declarations of the Australian Minister for External Affairs and of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek. *The Times* Washington correspondent reports :-

Of the anxiety which the events in India have aroused (in Washington) there can be no question, and the visit to India of General Stilwell, who commands the American forces in China, India and Burma, and of Mr. Lauchlin Currie, the President's special envoy to Chungking, has undoubted significance ... Suggestions looking towards a settlement have been advanced here

from time to time One which is believed to have approval in Washington, Canberra and Chungking, was the proclamation of a nominal commonwealth with a Provisional Government representing all parties (*The Times* August 11 1942 )

The Chinese Government newspaper, *Central Daily News* writes —

We receive the news of the arrest of Gandhi Nehru and Azad with the deepest regret The arrests, irrespective of right and wrong, would inevitably affect Indians' confidence in the United Nations, and furnish Axis propaganda Gandhi, Nehru and the others had the support of a majority of Indians and their arrest would not solve the problem If the conflict were allowed to continue, it would affect the entire war

The New York correspondent of the *Sunday Times* reported on August 16 —

Events in India are getting more publicity than any other events from overseas, and so far the bulk of this publicity has been hostile to the Government of India

The *Economist's* American correspondent noted on August 15 —

It would be a mistake to count on unqualified support from American opinion if no further attempts are made to work out a solution

Important section of democratic opinion in this country are also pressing for such a solution It is unfortunate that the declaration officially issued on behalf of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress on August 12 has continued the bad record of official Labour on India, carried forward from the Simon Commission, the Meerut Trial and the Mac Donald Government's arrest of scores of thousands By swinging completely behind the reactionary policy pursued and directing its criticism only against the Congress, this declaration has failed to respond to the urgency of the situation and is only calculated to deepen the gulf between the peoples of the two countries The demand that Congress must cease civil disobedience before negotiations can be opened, overlooks the fact that Congress had not yet launched its civil disobedience campaign when the arrests provoked the conflict, that the disorders have

been officially deplored as contrary to the wishes and interests of the Congress by such official Congress newspapers as have still been able to appear, and that the Congress was officially asking for negotiations before launching civil disobedience. In this context such a demand becomes an obstructionist demand to hinder negotiations, when it is only the opening of negotiations that can remove the obstacles to agreement. The present urgent situation is no time for standing on punctilio, but demands the instant and unconditional opening of negotiations with a view to finding the common basis for agreement in the imperative interest of both nations.

But it can be confidently stated that this obstructionist outlook is not representative of the general body of labour and democratic opinion. Such press organs as the *Manchester Guardian*, *News-Chronicle*, *Evening Standard*, and also the *Daily Herald* (until the official Labour declaration compelled it to perform a somersault and reverse its policy) have taken a critical line on the arrests and urged immediate negotiations. The Miners' Federation National Conference on August 1, representing half a million miners, unanimously adopted a resolution for the reopening of negotiations on the basis of the recognition of India's claim to independence. Trial ballots in big factories have shown a ten to one vote for Indian independence. The campaign of the fifty thousand members of the Communist Party has followed the lines of the National Conference resolution adopted on May 25, 1942, which declared :-

*To win the co-operation of the 400 millions of India in the common struggle, we must recognise the independence of India as an equal partner in the alliance of the United Nations, and reopen negotiations with the National Congress for the establishment of a National Government with full powers, subject only to such restrictions as the Indian people are willing to accept in the interests of India and of the common struggle against the Axis Powers.*

This demand has won enthusiastic endorsement at crowded mass demonstrations all over the country.

There is no doubt that the influence of world opinion, and especially of the other chief partners of the alliance of the United



Nations, will make itself felt in relation to the present Indian crisis, which is of urgent concern to all, and assist in reaching such a solution. But the primary political responsibility rests here in Britain, and it is the Labour and democratic movement of this country which must play the foremost part in fulfilling this responsibility. We must exert our endeavours to overcome the present crisis and find a base for the free and honourable co-operation of the great Indian nation in the alliance of the United Nations for the defeat of Fascism and the freedom of all nations, including India. We must exert our pressure on the Government to reverse its present policy and pursue a policy which will make such a settlement possible. We have here a duty to perform, equally in our own interests, in the interests of the Indian people, and in the interests of the common cause of victory over Fascism.

August 20, 1942.

R P.D

## INDIA MUST BE FREED

**Ben Bradley**

India's crisis is Britain's crisis. In face of this urgent situation the demand increases both in this country and in India for steps to be taken to end the deadlock and to win India as a free ally in the fight against Fascism.

The Announcement that Mr. Churchill was to make a statement in the House of Commons to be followed by a debate aroused considerable interest in Indian political circles, but no great hope that either the statement or debate would produce anything or bridge the political impasse; a serious matter because indicative of a widespread opinion in India that nothing can be expected from this side. Mr. Churchill's speech can only have had the effect of strengthening this opinion: for so far from making use of a great opportunity to allay this mistrust and to win not only the confidence of the Indian people but a new and great ally in the fight against Fascism, his speech, like that of Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, showed that reaction was still in the saddle. The speeches were an expression of complacency that repressive measures had held in check the reactions to arrests of Congress leaders; and their aggressive and belligerent tone has had a serious effect in India, as shown by comments of responsible Indian politicians and newspapers, resulting in further deterioration in the political situation.

The Civil and Military Gazette, a newspaper in no way pro-Congress, ironically comments on Mr. Churchill's efforts to belittle the Congress that he had forgotten to add 200,000,000 politically unawakened Indians to his total of non-Congress elements, whereby he could have proved, doubtless to the satisfaction of himself and his audience, that the Congress party's following is precisely minus 45,000,000. This newspaper's summing-up of the speech is that India had asked for bread and had been given a stone. The Tribune of Lahor, a moderate newspaper, speaks of Mr. Churchill's "amazing

and wholly inexcusable" ignorance of the representative character of the Congress : "Mr. Churchill. " adds the newspaper, "had made many blunders in his time and this one easily tops the list and will prove the most disastrous of all in its consequences." "The Hindu" of Madras declares that Mr. Churchill packed into 400 words more venom and mischievous half-truths than he gave to the house of Commons during the whole of the weary progress of the India Bill. Nationalist and Liberal newspapers generally stated that after negotiating with the National Congress so long and so often it is a bit late in the day for the British Government to begin challenging the representative character of the Congress.

In this country the speech was received by wide sections with dismay and disappointment. The News-Chronicle said : "This attitude is a complete bankruptcy of statesmanship" while the Manchester Guardian stated "There can be no going back on the offer of independence made to India. But is there to be no further effort to go forward?" As R. Palme Dutt said in his last notes of the month : "Important sections of democratic opinion in this country are also pressing for a solution." It is disastrous that this found no expression in the Premier's speech

On the same day that Mr. Churchill was making his statement in the house of Commons, a statement was issued in India urging him to declare India's independence forthwith to enable representatives of the major political parties to form a truly representative National Government. The signatories included the Moslem Premiers of Bengal and Sind, the Nawab of Dacca, the President of the Momin Conference, and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders. Dr. Mookerjee, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, is confident that many other parties and interests will actively support the statement and emphasised that Mr. Churchill did not realise how strong anti-British feeling was. The Viceroy has, however, refused permission for Dr. Mookerjee to visit the Congress leaders in prison to discuss his proposals.

In Calcutta a meeting of Europeans adopted unanimously a resolution declaring that the British Government should forthwith announce its readiness to transfer full power to a National Government in India and provide immediate facilities for its

formation. Mr. Rajagopalachari who has been working for unity, warmly endorsed this action of this section of Calcutta Europeans.

Immediate efforts to form an Indian National Government were urged in a statement issued by the leader of the Indian Liberal Federation, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, the representative of the Indian non-party group. They declared that the recent speeches by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery "will in no way help the worsening situation." The demand for independence and for a responsible National Government comes from all sides and is overwhelming. In the Legislative Assembly, when it met in Delhi on September 16, information was given by the Home Member of the Cost (658 killed) up to the present moment.

On the resumption of the debate in the Legislative Assembly on the present situation, Mr. N.M. Joshi, Labour representative (General Secretary, All-Indian Trades Union Congress) voiced a strong demand for a move by the Government to solve the deadlock. Independence was a national demand, he said, not made by Congress alone. The British did not yet appreciate the advantage of a National Government. They could have an Indian Army many times over a million from an independent India. Production and the war effort in general would be increased ten-fold if the Congress demand for an independent National Government was granted. Mr. Joshi was followed by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan of the Moslem League, who said that Gandhi and Nehru should be released. Sardar Sant Singh made the same plea and drew the lessons from Burma and Malaya which had proved that Britain could not fight both external and internal enemies.

From every side the call comes for a way out, for national unity, for independence so that India's mighty resources can be thrown into the fight against the world's greatest menace—Fascism. On behalf of the Communist Party of India, P.G. Joshi, its General Secretary, states: "This stalemate cannot last. It is the last desperate stand of reaction. The only problem is: Are we to leave it to the Japanese to break the stalemate, or will the Indian people, in alliance with the British people, break it?" The Communist party of India is working might and main to secure national unity

and to mobilise India's millions and material for the war against Fascism.

The immediate situation is extremely serious and threatening. The Japanese may attack at any moment. A set-back in India is not merely a victory against the Indian people but a victory of the Axis against the people of this country, the Soviet Union and all peoples fighting against Fascism. The present Government policy on India Cannot remain unchanged for a moment longer. The question is urgent. The policy of self-satisfaction and complacency—"India is returning to normal"—means continuous repression, and a refusal to acknowledge that in every village and hamlet, in every town and city, the people of India call out for that freedom which we are fighting to defend against Fascism.

We must increase our pressure a thousand-fold through out Trade Union organisations, workshops and factories everywhere and demand that the Government immediately declare India independent and reopen discussions with the representatives of Indian opinion

The C P. of India in their call to the people of India states : "Not Fascism, but the people will emerge victorious out of this war. This is the guarantee of India's liberation

We in this country have the power to make this possible to-day. And we must—and thus win India as a free ally in the fight against Fascism.

## PAKISTAN AND NATIONAL UNITY

G. Adhikari

The Question of national unity, of Hindu-Muslim unity, has always been before our country and therefore only if we see its evolution side by side with that of our national movement, can we understand it properly in its present phase. The Question itself has gone through different phases of development alongside with the different phases through which our national movement itself has gone. However, only such an historical dynamic treatment of the problem can enable us to understand its significance to-day, in to-day's phase of our national movement. Old ways of looking at the problem, old solutions, still persist in our understanding, and quite naturally so. These tendencies, these outmoded ways of thinking, which really form the deviations of to-day, have to be brought out and nailed down sharply, not only in terms of principles, but also in terms of historical evolution, otherwise they cannot be rooted out. Comrades raise several doubts, several questions. Where do these arise from? From nowhere else except our own former approach to the problem before the outbreak of the war. That is why a historical-political review is necessary, a review of how the question of Hindu-Muslim Unity is developed through the three different phases of our national movement. Only in this way can we understand the significance of Pakistan and of the demand for the self-determination of nationalities; only in this way can we understand exactly why these demands have arisen now at this time and not before.

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*"Labour Monthly", March 1943*

*[Being the speech (considerably abridged) on the present national questions in India at an Enlarged Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, held in September, 1942—Ed. L.M.]*

If we look back and examine the evolution of the problem we find three distinct approaches to the problem in three distinct periods, each one corresponding to a particular phase of our national movement.

In the first and earliest period, it was the fundamental axiom of the national movement (which was itself in its earliest period) that India is one nation; the difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is only one of religion; the stronger the national urge among the masses of both religions grows, the sooner this difference will go off and Hindus and Muslims will grow together as one. At this period, propaganda for unity on the basis of nationalism against imperialism was considered adequate solution of the problem. Such propaganda was carried on by the Liberals in the earliest period of the national movement and the Liberals at that period were the leaders of the incipient national movement. The liberals, who were the earliest nationalists, just argued : "What is needed to solve the problem is nationalist consciousness." This period lasted till about 1921, when it reached its culmination in the Khilafat-Congress unity.

The second period lasts from 1921 up to about 1936. In this period, with the further development of the Nationalist movement, comes a further development of the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity too, side by side with the former. in fact as an integral part of the former. In this period, the nationalist bourgeoisie grows, gets consolidated as leaders of the nationalist movement. Alongside with this growth, we find clashes and conflicts between the bourgeoisie of the two sections, arising side by side with this, as the other side of the very same process, the class movements of the workers and kisans grow up. Thus, we have two simultaneous aspects : one, clashes and conflicts among the vested interests , the other, growing unity among the rising movement of the kisans and the working class. The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity was, therefore, posed in this period thus : "The whole conflict between the two sections is confined to the bourgeoisie and the vested interests; the masses of either section have nothing to do with this conflict. Unite the masses of both sections on economic issues, on common struggles for economic demands, and the problem will be solved."

The third period begins from 1937, from the time of the Congress ministers, This is the period of the developing offensive of Fascism on a world scale. On a world scale, the question of forging national unity for fighting against Fascism begins to come to the forefront. the United National Front policy comes into her foreground. the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity comes on the agenda.

On the other hand, with the sharpening of the war-crisis, the question of power comes to the forefront. It is this, the rapid sharpening of the war-crisis and of the crisis of imperialism, which makes the Hindu-Muslim problem assume a new form. At this time, the demand of the day becomes no more one of constitutional concessions, no more one communal versus joint electorates, but one of power. The war-crisis poses sharply before the Indian people the problem of winning power. It is at this time that the Muslim League, comes out with its demand for a separate state or states for Muslims. This is the new form in which the Hindu-Muslim question appears now, the demand of the Muslims for their own state. The agitation of the Muslims as "oppressed communities" is brought more and more into political controversies. The outbreak of war brings the problem of unity of the Indian nation for winning power urgently on the agenda, simultancously develops the controversy of "Pakistan versus the Independence of India".

It is when we see the problem in such a historical-political perspective that we are able to distinguish three approaches to the problem and there corresponding aspects of it. Thus only can we see how each of three approaches arises from, and fits, a particular phase of developement of our national movement. We are able to see the new development of the present period and the corresponding necessity for the proletariat to make a new approach to the problem to suit this particular development.....

It was in our party letter of May 1941 ~~that~~ we really took a basic advance step in this direction. Formerly in 1938 we used to assert that India was a *homogeneity*, a *homogeneous* piece. Our ranks looked at the problem in a static, non-historical manner. The Marxian theory of development of a nation, that nationalities emerge and grow in the process of historical evolution—this theory had not entered their consciousness. Old attitudes, outmoded approaches,



still persisted in their consciousness. That is why some of our own comrades started quoting R. P. D.'s *India Today* against our Party Letter of May 1941. Palme Dutt had written these parts of his book as early as 1937 or so. He was describing the development of that time, he was not attempting to go beyond those problems. His object was to show the unity and one-ness of India as against British Imperialism, his object was not to go beyond this scope and to attempt a historical charting out of the future developments in the national sphere.

It is a static non-historical conception of a nation that lies behind most of the misconceptions and doubts regarding this problem within our own Party ranks. *A nation is a historical product of bourgeois development and evolution*—this is the basic starting point with which Stalin begins his classic article on the National Question. The idea that India has always been a nation—such an idea is non-Marxian and has no basis in reality. Such an idea was quite all right for the earliest nationalists, at a period when the nationalist movement was in its infancy. But to-day, to persist in such an understanding, is to forget all the intervening years of historical development; is to be completely blind to the realities of the present situation.

In fact, Marx himself went to the root of the Indian problem when he wrote: "The foundation for the unification of India in a modern sense was laid by the British conquest." This foundation was laid by exploitation. It is this unification, unification in a relative and historical sense, that is taken by people as a fact existing irrespective of history and of historical development. In this sense, however, the controversy, whether India is a nation or not, is wrong, and irrelevant. The unity of the national movement is asserted and stressed by the fight against imperialism—it is this which has given the impress of national unity to India. It is this aspect which R. P. D. stresses in his *India Today*. This aspect is the aspect of governing the struggle of the Indian people as a whole against British Imperialism. It is an aspect of governing a particular relative sphere. It has nothing to do with assertions like "India is a nation like England, Germany, etc.," not in this sense.

*A nation is not a static concept. Nations have evolved in history*

*out of historical development, as bourgeois development rises and grows.* The formation of nations, in the modern sense of the term (with their distinct characteristics, as outlined by Stalin), is a product of the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, by the epoch of feudalism breaking down and capitalist development rising. It is the spreading economy of capitalist development which creates the "national" consciousness and gives rise to the formation of nations as distinct entities. The spreading of commodity production, the growth of the world market and of money economy—it is these which necessitate the formation of nations as entities that can develop best in the capitalist economy, flower best under this economy and carry forward economic progress beyond this stage.

This national development grows in different forms in different countries, according to the historical peculiarities of development of each country. There are cases where different tribes are welded into a nation by bourgeois development. The classical examples of such cases are England and Germany—where there is a national homogeneity on the basis of one language, one race, etc. But besides this type, there is also a second historical type, where national development takes a different form. In this type, the grouping together of various tribes by bourgeois development takes a multinational shape. Examples of this are the Tsarist Empire, the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, etc. In this type of development, a dominant nation, with a high degree of bourgeois development, unites within its state boundaries various other nations, nations which have not yet grown to full nationhood, but which with increasing bourgeois development, find their national development thwarted and suppressed by the dominant nation and its centralised state. As the bourgeois development goes on, inside such a "multinational" state, conflicts grow up. The various nationalities begin to acquire national consciousness themselves and this growing national consciousness begins to assert itself in the urge for separate political and economic existence.

Such was the picture of Tsarist Russia in the 1911-1912 period, the period when the national question comes up in sharp form before the R.S.D.L.P. It could not be said at that time that all the various elements inside Russia had grown to full nationhood. But

this process was clearly visible, we find this process clearly described in Stalin's book. Each growing border nationality was pitching its own separate tent, was making its own separate camp. The national movement was rising up fast. We see in this period in Russia a classical example of the effects of bourgeois development inside multinational states of new nationalities arising and radically revolutionising the entire political scene. The Mensheviks saw in this, of course, only one aspect of it—the so-called “disintegrating” aspect. The Bolsheviks were quick to see the ‘progressive aspect’ and to use this to develop the revolutionary unity and activity of the masses of all the nationalities to a higher level.

We can thus see that within a multinational state, historical development constantly brings into the forefront ever new nationalist urges, ever new cases of nationalist consciousness. Nationalities lie dormant within the womb of historical development, at a particular stage they acquire sufficient strength to assert themselves, and then seemingly “new” problems crop up..... To have a static conception of a nation is to be blind to all such development, is to be blind to historical development and reality. Let us take the case of our own country. There have been different nationalities, not yet grown to full nationhood, lying dormant within it. Actually it was the foreign power, by its conquest and consequent shattering of all the old forms of economy, which actually started the process of “national” development. Before this foreign conquest, India was mainly of a feudal-village economy and therefore could not be called a “nation” in the modern bourgeois sense of the term. Before the British conquest of India, there was no part of India which can be described as a nation in the bourgeois sense. How then does this “national” development begin under the British in a typically uneven way? Such an uneven development had already set in even under a pre-capitalist economy, due to various historical and geographical causes. But this uneven development is accentuated by imperialism. This accentuated uneven development, imposed by imperialist exploitation and by the imperialist imposed distorted thwarted forms of capitalist development, gives rise in course of time to various problems. In certain parts, bourgeois development comes earliest; these parts naturally lead the national anti-imperialist

movement and at that stage we ourselves were not conscious that we are actually a multi-national state. As bourgeois development goes on spreading and as the masses of the people and specially the peasantry in all parts of India wake up to political consciousness, then it is that individual national movements begin to arise within the framework of the all-Indian national movement against imperialism.

It was this unrest of the border nationalities, their democratic movement for self-expression within the broad framework of the struggle against Tsarism, that characterises the Russia of 1912-14. Bourgeois separatist movements arise in the border nationalities, seeking to take advantage of, and exploit, this democratic sentiment of the masses. As against this, the labour movement in the border regions led by the Bolsheviks seeks to combat this separatist tendency and to unite all the nationalities for struggle against Tsarism. This is the crux of the national problem that came up before the Bolshevik Party in 1912. The Bolsheviks realised that only by recognising the essentially democratic and progressive character of this striving of the nationalities for self-determination, only by conceding this as a right, could they fight the bourgeois separatist tendencies successfully and forge unbreakable all-in unity against the Tsarist autocracy. The Bolsheviks demarcated clearly between two things 1) the awakening to national consciousness of new nationalities, an awakening which was historically progressive and found its expression in the demand for self-determination; 2) the way in which the bourgeoisie within these nationalities were seeking to take advantage of this essentially democratic urge of the masses and lead it into their own separatist class channels. They realised that to grant the first is the only way to defeat the second and to forge a greater revolutionary unity of all the masses than ever before.

Similarly, here too in our own country, the problem of unifying the different sections of our people against imperialism, for the war of liberation against Fascism arises at a time when the spread of the national movement has aroused various dormant nationalities of our land to life, when new "national" urges are beginning to appear under this impact. Unless we recognise this fact, we cannot find the key to unity to-day.

It is when we examine the present period that the full force of Stalin's remark comes out before us "In the case of India, too, it will probably be found that innumerable nationalities, till then lying dormant, would come to life with the further course of bourgeois development"

We Communists recognise, and explain clearly to the people two things: 1) The problem of nationalities can only be solved in a firm and lasting manner under Socialism when the disuniting factor of the bourgeoisie disappears. 2) But at the same time, a partial solution is also possible under capitalism, but only under conditions of complete and full democracy. The solution which the C.P.S.U. put forward in 1917 was one of attaining complete democracy, of a radical complete democratic revolution.

This is the crux of the problem which the bourgeois-reformists entirely pass over. The problem to-day is not a constitution-mongering problem of remaking boundaries. The question of communal unity must be seen as a revolutionary question of forging revolutionary unity of all sections of our people to break imperialist-feudal rule. The breaking of this rule is the precondition to the people being able to remake boundaries in a democratic way.

This is where the Communist solution is a revolutionary solution and is sharply demarcated from all constitution-mongering of the Liberals and the bourgeois-reformists. To try to wander off into ethnographic pastimes and boundary-making formula is to stray from the revolutionary path into the path of reformism. The problem before us to-day is not one of drawing maps and making boundaries, but one of forging the revolutionary unity of action of all sections of our people, to win the common war of liberation and to secure the common freedom of all.

This is what is stressed in paragraph 1 of our Resolution. That our solution is not a constitutional solution, that the cornerstone of our policy is the unity of the masses as the vanguard of the national movement.

Our policy with respect to the Hindu-Moslem problem fits into this general framework. This policy has to be sharply and clearly demarcated from 1) the stand of Jinnah and the separatists; 2) the

*stand of the National Congress leadership: 3) the stand of the Akhanda Hindustanwallas.....*

It is necessary, in closing, to stress once again one important point—that is the crux of Communist policy. The question of the self-determination of nationalities is to be looked upon as a political revolutionary question, not a constitutional question.

It is the constitutionalist whose first question is: "Whether to separate or not." But Communists say: When we grant the right of self-determination as an unconditional right, then this right becomes the hall-mark of sovereignty. of equality. The way in which we should pose the question of nationalities is: how shall we define the nationalities so as to create conditions where there will be the fullest and freest flowering and development of national characteristics? We keep two aspects in mind, two aspects which cannot be separated: 1) Right of separation; 2) Object of unification. Our solution itself is no static solution. In the Soviet Union, for example, after the Revolution itself, a number of nationalities attained full-fledged nationhood in course of time. Hence, we steadily keep before ourselves the two criteria: 1) the grant of the right of separation dispels distrust and creates unity here and now: 2) We should so demarcate the nationalities that in a free and democratic India, the nationalities will grow and flower, will develop towards Socialism.

# FAMINE IN INDIA

V. K. Krishna Menon

The resolution on India passed by the Trades Union Congress at Southport voices the grave and growing concern of the British labour movement about the disastrous political and economic situation in India. The ending of the deadlock, steps to relieve the famine, the release of the prisoners a national government now—these are the demands set forth in the decision of the Trade Unions.

These same demands have been made by Indian leaders, Liberals, Communists, non-party men and by Hindu, Moslem and Christian associations. They see India heavily endangered by political conflict and dreadful famine conditions. The restoration of national leadership to the people is proclaimed by them as a necessity for India's survival and for the reinforcement of the strength and for the cause of the United Nations.

The famine in India is inadequately recognised abroad—it is the worst in her history. Early this year, when great parts of India had become famine-stricken, Mr. Amery stated that there was no famine in India. The situation was allowed to drift from bad to worse

This grave situation is at its worst in the provinces of Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Assam, nearest to the India-Japan front.

The British owned Statesman (of Calcutta) characterises the situation as 'an all India disgrace' and says —

'Thoughtful Britons in India realise that as long as the British Parliament and secretary of State retain responsibility of India's welfare the blame unavoidably rests on them.'

*"127 people have been found in a state of collapse in the streets of Calcutta All were removed to hospital, where 12 died. The cause of collapse is said to be starvation or sickness"*—

*The Times, August 19, 1943*

*Measures have been taken for the quick removal of corpses from the streets, and for the prompt treatment in hospital of men found in a state of collapse through starvation or sickness.—Reuter Message from Calcutta, August 22, 1943.*

*"The Labour Monthly", October 1943*

Food Prices in India have risen by 300 to 1,200 per cent. At controlled prices, which are between three and seven times above the pre-war level, food is unobtainable for the common people. Rice, the cheapest grain, is available to the bulk of the people in Malabar or Bengal only to the extent often of one-tenth or even one twentieth of pre-war quantities. Food queues are a normal feature in many parts of India.

What are the causes ?

The muddle and callousness of transport policy to some extent prevents the mobility of food stocks, but the main factor is the inefficiency of the administration and the incapacity of the Central Government to function as an all India Government. Nowhere more than here is the necessity of a truly National Government proclaimed so forcefully by grim economic conditions. The only time that the Linlithgow government functioned as an All-India power, acted with earnestness and a sense of urgency, swept away red tape and disregarded provincialisms and punctilio, was when it rounded up its political opponents and forged the present deadlock. It continues to use these powers for maintaining the dead-lock. When it comes to feeding the people, it is, in fact, incapable of action. Its provincial agents (British) do not respond. Here is the plaintive cry of an Indian member of the Viceroy's Council. Sir Aziz Huq, who recently had to hand over his Food portfolio to Sir J. Strivasta, a big landlord and millowner from the United Provinces. Reporting the Central Legislative Assembly, the observer correspondent cabled (August 21) from Kalimpong : -

The Indian problem is rapidly assuming a concentrated form expressible in the four letters *Food*. Debates in the Central legislature are considered to have revealed a breakdown of authority and initiative.

He goes on to say that Sir Aziz "Explained to the Assembly how governments of provinces successfully sabotage arrangements for their surpluses to the starving provinces in Eastern India."

These Provinces as the same correspondent points out, are, in the main, administered by British Governors, all of whom are supposed to be actively promoting the war effort in harmony with the Central Government. The correspondent adds that public opinion in the provinces, including European opinion expressed by European groups in the legislatures and the *Statesman*, blames the Central Government, which is "accused of lack of



foresight followed by weakness." These critics say that "constitutional propriety" towards the Provinces is made the excuse for failure to exercise control and do no more than "denounce hoarders and call incessantly for public support, which it has not got; and that conscious of its action against Congress having 'strained its popularity', the Central Government is 'anxious' to show itself conciliatory in other directions". These "directions" happen to be those of vested interests, reactionaries, sycophants, and other antisocial elements.

Food is exported from India even today. The demand for its stoppage is now more than a year old. At the same time, not only is there little increase in production, but the offer and prospects of large imports is disregarded.

It is ridiculous to argue that there is plenty of food, and there is too much money in the hands of the people (as the Government does) and that this is the reason for the famine! Yet Bengal, it is now officially admitted, has a deficiency of one and a half million tons of rice. If there is a slight All India increase in food production today over the previous decade, there is an increase of population by fifty millions, vast distress through flood and cyclone, and inroads into the national granary by war needs.

Hoarding cannot be checked by shooting a few "looters" at sight, as the magistrate of Nasik was authorised to do. "Looters" are, at any rate, not the hoarders. Nor are the hoarders that really cause panic and famine the small petty shopkeepers, nor the small peasant or householder. The Government refuse to operate against the combines and the landlords.

Hoarding by consumers can only be stopped when there is national leadership in the Government. The most potent check on hoarding is public confidence. If provincial governments, as indicated by the *Observer's* correspondents, are themselves parochial and capable of "sabotage," it is not surprising that small men should think of the next meal, or even of making some profit. The unity committees, set up largely under the inspiration of the Communist, Trade Unionists and Congressmen who are free, have broken down all political barriers and pointed out the way to a National Government.

The latest performance of the Government is the announcement that the present rise in prices is due to lack of saving, too much money, that conditions will be worse if the peasants do not save.

So it proposes to launch through its officials and non-official supporters a campaign to collect in savings alone some 200 crores of rupees from the Indian peasant out of his augmented income for war savings. This is just an exaction and will be accompanied by the usual cruelty and corruption of officials in India. It is a cruel remedy to pose before a starving population.

These and other causes have created a condition where people in some parts, as a Daily Express correspondent pointed out, are eating locusts and leaves, and there is a total of 125 million starving people in India. In Malabar in some areas people are reduced to eating young grass. A Conservative member of Parliament Mr. Necholson told Mr. Amery (15 August) in the House of Commons that in Bengal thousands of people were eating off garbage heaps. There are tens of thousands of destitutes in every city, homeless, foodless and almost unclothed. Against them the Government is increasingly operating the vagrancy laws.

This situation must end. There must be a stoppage of Indian exports, control of stocks, vigorous action against hoarders British or Indian. More shipping must be made available for India's food supplies at once and there must be state purchases internally and externally. The policy of imposing greater burdens on the peasantry by forced loans and exactions must stop. War expenditure and supplies must be augmented and reinforced, not by the present policy of plunder and loot, but by national organisation and popular support. This, and not grandiose schemes on paper, which can hardly become operative, is the way to remedy famine in India.

The deadlock is thus not only a political issue; its ending is an urgent necessity to rescue the people of India from hunger and death, to build up Indian resistance, to counter the decay of morale and defeatism. The restoration to the Indian people of their leaders by the release of the political prisoners, the reversal of the present policy by opening of negotiations, the abandonment once and for all of plunder policies in India's economy and the honest pursuit of ways and means to establish national co-operation must be demanded by the people of Britain.

The T.U.C. resolution makes these demands. They must become effective immediately. For they are urgent and imperative necessities."

## DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL IN 1943

(“Hey ! Listen !” – “What” ? – “The Comintern’s been dissolved.” This conversation took place at comintern headquarters, in the office occupied by the Spanish section of the ECCI. The speakers obtained the information from the Soviet press. The Communist International ceased publication. Shortly afterwards a new periodical, in Russian and other languages appeared entitled *‘The war and the working class’* (after the war its title was changed to *New times*). On their return to Moscow after the dissolution, a large proportion of the comintern staff was distributed among the ‘national committees’, the foreign-languages broadcasting service, and various propaganda, press, and publication departments of the CPSU. Interviewed on the dissolution by Reuter’s chief Moscow correspondent, Stalin Said :

The dissolution of the Communist International is proper and timely because it facilitates the organisation of the common onslaught of all freedom-loving nations against the common enemy Hitlerism. The dissolution of the communist International is proper because :

(a) It exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that “Moscow” allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to “Bolshevise” them. An end is now being put to this lie.

(b) It exposes the calumny of the adversaries of Communism within the Labour movement to the effect that Communist Parties

*[(This dissolution took place in the midst of World War, II. Excerpts from the Communist International (1919-1943).*

*Documents 1929-1943, Compiled by the Oxford University Press, Volume No. 3, Page 527 to 533.)]*

*Resolution of the ECCI Presidium Recommending the Dissolution of the Communist International*

*15 May 1943 World News and Views XXIII, 22, P 169, 29 May 1943.*

in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interests of their people but on orders from outside. And end is now being put to this calumny too.

(c) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp of national liberation—for unfolding the struggle against Fascism.

(d) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting all freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism, thus clearing the way to the future organisation of a companionship of nations based up on their equality.

I think that all these circumstances taken together will result in a further strengthening of the United Front of the Allies and other united nations in their fight for victory over Hitlerite tyranny. I feel that the dissolution of the Communist International is perfectly timely—because it is exactly now, when the Fascist beast is exerting its last strength, that it is necessary to organise the common onslaught of freedom-loving countries to finish off this beast and to deliver the people from Fascist oppression.)

The historic role of the Communist International, which was founded in 1919 as a result of the political union of the great majority of old, pre-war working class parties, consisted in upholding the principles of Marxism from vulgarization and distortion by the opportunist elements in the working-class movement, in helping to promote the consolidation in a number of countries of the vanguard of the foremost workers in real working-class parties, and in helping them to mobilize the workers for the defence of their economic and political interests and for the struggle against fascism and the war the latter was preparing and for support of the Soviet Union as the chief bulwark against fascism.

The Communist International from the first exposed the real meaning of the 'Anti-Comintern Pact,' as a weapon for the preparation of war by the Hitlerites. Long before the war, it ceaselessly and tirelessly exposed the vicious, subversive work of the Hitlerites who masked it by their screams about the so-called

interference of the Communist International in the internal affairs of these States.

But long before the war it became more and more clear that, with the increasing complications in the internal and international relations of the various countries, any sort of international centre would encounter insuperable obstacles in solving the problems facing the movement in each separate country. The deep differences of the historic paths of development of various countries, the differences in their character and even contradictions in their social orders, the differences in the level and tempo of their economic and political development, the differences, finally, in the degree of consciousness and organization of the workers, conditioned the different problems facing the working class of the various countries.

The whole development of events in the last quarter of century, and the experience accumulated by the Communist International convincingly showed that the organizational form of uniting the workers chosen by the first Congress of the Communist International answered the conditions of the first stages of the working-class movement but has been outgrown by the growth of this movement and by the complications of its problems in separate countries, and has even become a drag on the further strengthening of the national working-class parties.

The World War that the Hitlerites have let loose has still further sharpened the differences in the situation of the separate countries, and has placed a deep dividing line between those countries which fell under the Hitlerite tyranny and those freedom-loving peoples who have united in a powerful anti-Hitlerite coalition.

In the Countries of the Hitlerite bloc the fundamental task of the working class, the toilers, and all honest people consists in giving all help for the defeat of this bloc, by sabotage of the Hitlerite military machine from within, and by helping to overthrow the Government who are guilty of the war. In the Countries of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, the sacred duty of the widest masses of the people, and in the first place of the foremost workers, consists in aiding by every means the military efforts of the Governments of these countries aimed at the speediest defeat of the Hitlerite bloc

and the assurance of the friendship of nations based on their equality.

At the same time the fact must not be lost sight of that separate countries which are members of the anti-Hitlerite coalition have their own particular problems. For example, in countries occupied by the Hitlerites which have lost their State independence the basic task of the foremost workers and of the wide masses of the people consists in promoting armed struggle, developing into a national war of liberation against Hitlerite Germany. At the same time, the war of liberation of the freedom-loving peoples against the Hitlerite tyranny, which has brought into movement the masses of the people, uniting them without difference of party or religion in the ranks of a powerful anti-Hitlerite coalition, has demonstrated with still greater clearness that the general national upsurge and mobilization of the people for the speediest victory over the enemy can be best of all and most fruitfully carried out by the vanguard of the working class movement of each separate country, working within the framework of its own country.

Already the seventh congress of the Communist International, meeting in 1935, taking into account the change (s) that had taken place both in the international situation and in the working-class movements that demand great flexibility and independence of its section in deciding the problems confronting them, emphasized the necessity for the Executive committee of the Communist International, in deciding all questions of the working-class movement arising from the concrete conditions and peculiarities of each country, to make a rule of avoiding interference in the internal organizational affairs of the Communist Parties. These same considerations guided the Communist International in considering the resolution of the Communist party of the USA of November 1940, on its withdrawal from the ranks of the Communist International.

Guided by the judgement of the founders of Marxism-Leninism communists have never been supporters of the conservation of organizational forms that have outlived themselves. They have always subordinated forms or organization of the working-class movement and the methods of working of such organizations, to the fundamental

political interest of the working-class movement as a whole. to the peculiarities of the concrete historical situation and to the problems immediately resulting from this situation. They remember the example of the great Marx, who united the foremost workers in the ranks of the Working Men's International Association, and, when the First International had fulfilled its historical task, laying the foundations for the development of the working-class parties in the countries of Europe and America, and, as a result of the matured situation creating mass National Working-class parties, dissolved the first International inasmuch as this form of organization already no longer corresponded to the demands confronting it.

In Consideration of the above, and taking into account the growth and political maturity of the communist parties and their leading cadres in the separate countries, and also having in view the fact that during the present war some sections have raised the question of the dissolution of the Communist International as the directing centre of the International working-class movement.

The presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in the circumstances of the world War not being able to convene a congress of the Communist International, puts forward the following proposal for ratification by the sections of the Communist International.

The Communist International, as the directing centre of the International working-class movement, is to be dissolved, thus freeing the Sections of the Communist International from their obligations arising from the statutes and resolutions of the Congresses of the Communist International.

The presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International calls on all supporters of the Communist International to concentrate their energies on whole-hearted support of and active participation in the war of liberation of the peoples and states of the anti-Hitlerite coalition for the speediest defeat of the deadly enemy of the working class and toilers—German fascism and its associates and vassals.

The presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Signed) :

G. DIMITROV	O. KUUSINEN
M. ERCOLI	D. MANUILSKY
W. FLORIN	A. MARTY
K. GOTTWALD	W. PIECK
V. KOLAROV	M. THOREZ
J. KOPLENIG	A. ZHDANOV

The following representatives of communist parties also append their signatures to the present resolution :

BIANCO (Italy)

DOLORES IBARRURI (Spain)

LEKHTININ (Finland)

ANNA PAUKER (Rumania)

MATTHIAS RAKOSI (Hungary)

(The Central Committee of the CPGB adopted unanimously a resolution endorsing the proposal, which 'would reinforce national and international Unity.' The Czechoslovak central committee said dissolution was in the interests of the broader unity of all forces both domestic and international in the decisive battle against Hitlerism; the Spanish central committee welcomed and approved the proposal. 'The dissolution of the International, which frees us from the obligations arising from its statutes and decisions, will still further reinforce the national character of the Spanish Communist Party and facilitate the unification of all Spanish patriots both within Spain and in emigration and so stimulate the development of all national forces in the struggle to recapture the freedom and independence of Spain.' The KPD said the decision would cut the ground from under the feet of the German fascists, who alleged that Moscow interfered in the affairs of other States; the Italian central committee said the dissolution would remove the misunderstandings

*Moscow 15 May 1943*

*Statement of the presidium of the ECCI on the dissolution of the communist international*

*8 June 1943, World News and Views XXIII, 25 P. 197, 19 June 1943*



and difficulties which still existed among the workers and make it easier for them to unite. The Chinese CP Central committee expressed its full agreement: the Comintern had fulfilled its historical mission in protecting Marxism from distortion, in helping progressive forces to unite, in supporting the Soviet Union and fighting fascism, and it had done all in its power to bring about co-operation between the KMT and the CCP, in its organizational form it had now outlived itself. The CCP had received much help from the Comintern in its revolutionary struggle, but the Chinese communists had now for a long time been free to decide independently on its policy and put it into effect.)

At its last meeting on 8 June 1943, the Presidium of the Executive committee of the Communist International considered the decisions received from its Sections in connection with its proposals of 15 May 1943, on the dissolution of the Communist International, and decided the following :

1 That the proposal on the dissolution of the Communist International has been approved by .

The Communist party of Australia, Communist Party of Austria, Communist Party of the Argentine, Communist Party of Belgium, Communist Party of Bulgaria, Communist Party of Great Britain, Communist Party of Hungary, Communist Party of Germany, Communist Party of Ireland, Communist Party of Spain, Communist Party of Italy, Communist Party of Canada, the United Socialist party of Catalonia, the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of Colombia, the Revolutionary Communist Union of Cuba, the Communist Party of Mexico, the Workers' Party of Poland, the Communist Party of Rumania, the Communist Party of Syria, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Uruguay, the Communist Party of Finland, the Communist Party of France, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party of Chile, the Communist Party of Switzerland, the Communist Party of Sweden, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Communist Party of the Union of South Africa, the Communist International of Youth ( Which is incorporated in the Communist International with the full rights of a Section).

2. That not one of the existing sections of the Communist International sent in any objection to the proposal of the Presidium of the EC.

In view of all this the presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International declares :

1. That the proposal for the dissolution of the Communist International has been unanimously approved by all Sections able to send in their decisions, including all the most important Sections.

2. It considers that as from the 10th of June, 1943, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the Presidium and Secretariat of the Executive Committee, as well as the International Control Commission, have been dissolved.

3. It entrusts to a committee composed of Dimitrov (as Chairman), Manuilsky, Ercoli, and Pieck to carry out the actual winding up of the affairs of the organs, apparatus, and property of the Communist International.

(Signed) on behalf of the Presidium of the ECCI

DIMITROV

*Dissolution of The Communist International*

## **CEMENTING THE UNITY OF FREEDOM-LOVING PEOPLES**

*To Destroy Fascist-Imperialism*

**P. C. Joshi**

THE Statement (see full text of Premier Stalin on the dissolution of the Communist International is an historic event. In the annals of mankind's freedom movement, it will rank with that memorable call which Lenin as the Premier of the new-born Soviet Union gave to the freedom-loving peoples of the world asking them to join in the common endeavour for making peace based on the annulment of all conquests and the freedom and equality of all nations

To-day at an equally decisive turning point in the destiny of mankind, Stalin's call comes clear and sharp to the patriots in every country in the anti-fascist coalition, to the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

To unite in an unbreakable front of national liberation in their respective countries, to join in one invincible united front of the peoples to deal the final death-blow to fascist-imperialism in the critical battles that are at hand and to win a world of freedom and equality of peoples.

The dissolution of the Communist International, as Stalin points out, is perfectly timely. It comes when the Communist Parties in every country have grown in strength and stature, as patriotic parties rooted in the working class and peoples of their own land, thanks to the theoretical and practical guidance given by the Leninist-Stalinist International during the past 24 years. Today, the

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*Published in "People's War" June 6, 1943*

Communist Parties in every country are a powerful force building that all-in national unity in their own countries, and working for that closest collaboration between the peoples of the United Nations and with the peoples of the fascist-enslaved countries, without which victory over fascism in the final battles cannot be won and the freedom of the peoples secured

Today the existence of the Comintern as a world centre, guiding the Communist movement is no longer necessary. The Communist Parties in every country know their job and are doing it very well indeed. On the other hand, the formal existence of the Comintern in Moscow only served as an excuse to those disruptors who seek to spoil that job by creating bad blood between the members of the United Nations and the Soviet Union, or by slandering the Communist Parties as agents of Moscow.

The dissolution of the Comintern and the statement of Stalin strengthens the position of the Communist Party of India and its endeavour to achieve the unity of all the patriotic parties and of the people of India for national defence. By exposing the myth of the "Bolshevik bogey" and by giving the lie to the slander and suspicion that the Indian Communists take their orders from Moscow, this great step will enable us to reach out to every section of the patriotic masses and bring them together in one powerful united national front for the defence of the Motherland, for winning the freedom of our country shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Union and the other United Nations.

The Communist Party of India dedicates itself to this task, so that our people may play a worthy role in the upsurge of international unity and action which will no doubt be released by Stalin's historic call and will ensure victory of the final onslaught against the fascist gangsters to win the freedom of all the peoples.

# STALIN'S LEAD

## To All Patriots

*The following is Stalin's striking letter to Reuter's chief correspondent in the Soviet Union, Mr. Harold King, concerning the dissolution of the Comintern in reply to the latter's enquiry of authoritative Soviet opinion in regard to it. Stalin succinctly gives the reasons.*

**Question :** British comment on the decision to wind up the Comintern has been very favourable. What is the Soviet view of this matter and of its bearing on future international relations ?

**Answer :** The dissolution of the Communist International is proper and timely because it facilitates the organisation of the common onslaught of all freedom-loving nations against the common enemy—Hitlerism. The dissolution of the Communist International is proper because

a) It exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that "Moscow" allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to "Bolshevise" them. An end is now being put to this lie.

b) It exposes the calumny of the adversaries of Communism within the Labour Movement to the effect that Communist Parties in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interests of their people but on orders from outside. An end is now being put to this calumny too.

c) It facilitates the work of patriots in freedom-loving countries for uniting progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of Party or religious faith, into a single camp of national liberation for the unfolding struggle against Fascism.

d) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting

all freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism. thus clearing the way to future organisation of a companionship of nations based upon their equality

I think that all these circumstances taken together. will result in further strengthening of the united front of the Allies and other nations in their fight for victory over Hitlerite tyranny.

I feel that the dissolution of the Communist International is perfectly timely because it is exactly now when the fascist beast is exerting its last strength that it is necessary to organise the common onslaught of freedom-loving countries to finish off this beast and to deliver the people from fascist oppression.

With respect,

Sd / J Stalin

# AFTER OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

E. M. S. Namboodiripad

## I. The Congress-league relation

We have noted earlier that the Muslims were represented in the elections not by a single political party, but by a number of organizations, parties and individuals. The general picture of Muslim politics that presented itself during the elections consisted of several organizations and individuals among whom some were close to the Congress and others opposed to it and receiving assistance from the British government for that reason. This situation continued even when the formation of ministries became a live issue. In the Muslim majority provinces where the Congress met with a number of electoral reverses, there was no single political party of the Muslims capable of forming ministries. It was not the Muslim League but the Krishak Praja Party and the Unionist Party formed ministries in Bengal and Punjab, respectively, with support of other groups in the legislatures. The League had contested only a few seats because it lacked the confidence of winning the elections. So, the question of leaders of the Muslim League forming ministries did not arise.

However, the attitude of the Congress towards forming ministries and the discussions held between the Congress and certain Muslim organizations which were regarded nationalist brought about a change in this situation. A situation began to develop in which the Muslim League which was only one of the parties of the Muslims claimed itself to be the sole representative of the Muslims. It was later alleged and repeated in the posthumously published memoirs of Maulana Azad that what led to the growth of the Muslim League was the "rigid attitude" adopted by the Congress in general and its president Nehru in particular in regard to the formation of ministries.

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*Excerpts from "A HISTORY OF INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE"*  
*written by E. M. S. Namboodiripad*

In order to understand the truth of the matter, it is necessary to look back to the Muslim politics at the time of the elections. The capacity of the Congress to approach the Muslim voters was limited. Among the Muslim majority provinces, the Congress was strong only in the NWF Province. In many areas there were a number of Muslim leaders who wanted to maintain good relations with the Congress. Jamait-ul-Ulema was the powerful organization of such leaders. Besides, the leaders of the Muslim organizations including the Muslim League were formerly the active workers of the Congress. Like Jinnah, these leaders also were organizing Muslims on the basis of moderate politics and were in agreement with the Congress on all issues except on the question of Muslim representation in the new constitution

There were also certain other Muslim parties almost in all provinces representing the big landlords among the Muslims. With the assistance of the British they were striving to mobilize the Muslim masses against the Congress as well as against the Muslim parties like the League, the Jamait-ul-Ulema, etc. Consequently, many Muslim parties including the League had reached some kind of informal understanding with the Congress. It was partly as a result of this that the Congress decided to contest only a few seats reserved for the Muslims. This was mainly in the NWF Province

Even at this stage there were frictions between the moderate Muslim leaders like Jinnah and the Congress leaders like Nehru. It was but natural that the general Congress policy of fighting the landlords and other reactionary forces in order to wipe out hunger and poverty and the Congress election manifesto were allergic to the moderate Muslim politicians. Moreover, Nehru had repeatedly stressed during the election campaign that the caste-communal politics was a product of the reactionary social forces and that the demand of communal representation in which the common people of all castes and religions had no interest at all was of benefit only to a handful of bigwigs among them. Jinnah could not but contest these arguments.

Thus, even Jinnah who, as compared to many other Muslim leaders, had been able to reconcile with Congress raised voice



against the approach of the anti-imperialist front represented by Nehru in his election campaign

The situation became more complicated after the elections. In the United Provinces where the Muslims constituted a considerable force, the Muslim League was led by a former Congress worker, Choudhury Khaliquzzman who held political negotiations with the Congress leaders Govind Ballabh Pant and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. As a result of these negotiations, Khaliquazzman rejected the offer of joining the minority 'interim' government of the loyalists in the province. The informal understanding reached between the Congress and the Muslim League was that the League would be a partner in the government when the Congress formed its ministry after ending the deadlock in connection with office acceptance.

However, this raised a controversy in the Congress leadership. Many prominent Congress leaders including Nehru and Azad were opposed to the understanding with the League. Following discussions held with the Congress leadership, it was finally decided to take ministers from the League under certain conditions. These conditions were as follows

1. The Muslim League in the U. P. Assembly should not function as a separate group. Their members should join the Congress Parliamentary Party. Like other members of the Congress Parliamentary Party, they should function subject to the discipline of the Congress
2. The Parliamentary Board of the League in U.P. should be dissolved and the League members should work for the success of the Congress candidates in the future by elections.
3. In case the Congress decides to resign from the ministry or legislature, the League members should follow suit.

These conditions were not acceptable to the League. They meant that the members of the League should become Congressmen. Not only did the attempts to form a coalition government in U. P. fail, but the League leaders charged the Congress leaders with trying to foist Congress domination over the Muslims.

Its repercussions were not confined to U. P. alone. A country-wide campaign was conducted that the "Hindu Congress" was trying to thrust its domination on Muslims and other minorities.

The case of U. P., was cited as an example to show that the Congress was trying to establish its single party rule without allowing the true representatives of the Muslim community to participate in the ministry, even after it became clear that the Congress lacked the support of the Muslims. The Muslim leaders, including Jinnah, created the feeling among the Muslim community that its political organizations should unite to defeat the Congress design to establish Hindu domination.

As a direct consequence of this, the Muslim leaders belonging to different organizations till then decided to join the League. The Unionist Party leader Sikander Hyat Khan, the Krishak Praja Party leader Fazlul Huq, Muhammad Saadulla of Assam and others called upon their partymen to join the League. All these were done in deference to the call given by Jinnah to the Muslims to organize themselves against the Hindu domination of the Congress and to regard the League the organization of their own. They resisted what they considered to be "anti-Muslim" actions taken by the Congress ministries in the different provinces and organized the Muslim masses against them.

These activities that continued for three years from 1937 raised the Muslim League to a new status. Like the Congress which entered into negotiations with the government and other political parties claiming itself to be the sole representative of the Indian people, the League now started negotiating with the Congress as the party representing the Indian Muslims. In order to bring pressure to bear on these negotiations, the League also organized various struggles. This ultimately led the League in 1940 to adopt the "Pakistan resolution" at Lahore.

There are some who hold that this situation could have been avoided had the Congress not taken such an adamant attitude with regard to the formation of the ministry in U. P. and evaluate the subsequent political events accordingly. The developments with regard to the origin and growth of the Congress and the Muslim League, and the conflicts and compromises between them as explained in the earlier chapters would show that this is incorrect. It may be recalled that the bourgeois section among the Muslims formed its own political organization (the Muslim League) when

the Congress (bourgeois) leadership gathered enough strength to demand Swaraj as its political objective. Then the question was what share the Muslim bourgeoisie would get in the Swaraj. When the Indian bourgeoisie began to fight adopting different means to achieve its objective, the Muslim bourgeoisie, a part of Indian bourgeoisie, began to do the same. This was basic to the Congress-League relations which took different forms at different stages.

The Congress-League conflict in the initial period (1906-1916); the Lucknow Pact between them in 1916; the Khilafat movement which grew as part of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement; the conflict between them following the failure of the movement; the cooperation among the Jinnah group, the moderates and the Congress in the Central legislature; the Congress-League split on the question of Gandhi's civil disobedience movement and the Round Table Conference; cooperation between the Congress and the League once again, to a lesser extent though, following the adoption of parliamentary programme by the Congress—these constitute the general picture of the Congress-League relation.

In other words, a particular section of the bourgeoisie belonging to the Muslim community was getting strengthened as part of the Indian bourgeoisie politically as well as socially and economically. This was a conflict between two sections of the bourgeoisie which were equally interested in acquiring power from the British, a conflict on the question of sharing political power.

The elections to the provincial legislatures held in 1937; constitute an evidence to show the extent to which the Indian bourgeoisie in general and its component Muslim bourgeoisie in particular had been able to make progress. The Indian bourgeoisie as a whole had been engaged in the task of deriving maximum benefit out of the provincial autonomy contained in the provisions of the new administrative reforms and gaining political power at the Centre. The Muslim bourgeoisie, on the other hand, had been trying to maximize their share of power. It was this effort that appeared in the form of the urgent demand of forming a Congress-League coalition Government in 1937. It was the same that led the Muslim League to raise the slogan of Pakistan in the sense of dividing India into "Hindu India" and "Muslim India" and dividing power between the bourgeoisie in the respective sectors.

It is meaningful that the need for a unified all-India leadership for the Muslims was felt when it became clear that the majority everywhere except in the Muslim majority regions and consequently the political power in the provinces passed into the Congress. The proposal for a Congress-League coalition was an expression of this desire. A more general form of the same appeared later in the demand for Pakistan. Just as the Congress asked the British to accept its claim to represent the Indian people, so the Muslim leadership demanded the Congress and the government to accept its claim to represent the Muslim community.

This was a challenge to the claim made by the Congress that it represented the entire Indian people. Similarly, the support received by the Congress in regions like the NWFP Province and the programme of "mass contact" with Muslims adopted by the Congress to extend this support to other regions constituted a challenge to the claim made by the League.

The stand taken by the League leaders was that the Congress and the League were the organizations of the Hindus and Muslims, respectively, and that they together should settle accounts with the British and acquire the rights of the Indian bourgeoisie. If this were conceded, then Congress would cease to exist politically. That was why the Congress demanded dissolution of the League Parliamentary Party in return to the induction of League members in the ministry. If this demand was accepted, then the League would cease to exist. That was why the League leaders rejected it. In other words, basic to the rise of the Muslim League during 1937-1940 was the split and mutual competition within the Indian bourgeoisie.

## **II. The New Popular Upsurge**

The formation of Congress ministries in seven provinces first and coalition ministries with Congress partnership later in Assam and NWFP gave rise to optimism among the people throughout the country. People believed that, the new government would bring measures against vested interests as envisaged in the Karachi-Faizpur Congress resolutions and the Congress election manifesto. However, the ministers and the Congress leaders did not act in accordance with the aspirations of the people and even went against them. They, in fact, took a number of actions against ordinary

Congressmen and other political workers as well as their supporters. Most ministries functioned in a manner in which the ministers came to terms with the Governors, British civilian official and the vested interests.

Nehru expresses protest and opposition to this state of affairs, but with no effect. Gandhi who had ceased to be even a four-anna member of the Congress was standing firmly behind the ministers and other right-wing Congress leaders. Nehru was not prepared to raise his voice against Gandhi. Nehru's biographer stated:

*On the whole, the record of the Congress ministries was, as Jawaharlal Nehru realized soon enough, static if not counter-revolutionary. The worst cases were Bombay and Madras. There was no question now of taking office to combat the new Act: the ministers worked in close cooperation with the Governors, and in carrying out minor reforms forgot the major issues. Soon after they took office, Jawaharlal, as Congress president, directed them to release all political prisoners. Govind Ballabh Pant's first act on taking charge in the U.P. was to sit down at his office table to write the order for their discharge. But K. M. Munshi, the Home Minister of Bombay, 'if anything more royalist than the king' ignored his directive. Keen to detain communist and left wing leaders, he asked a surprised Viceroy to put the C.I.D. to deal with communists in and around Bombay. When Jawaharlal rebuked Munshi for his zeal in this matter—you have already become a police officer"—Munshi appealed to the higher authority of Gandhi and continued as before. Jawaharlal protested in the Working Committee that the Congress ministers appeared more concerned about the effect their actions would have upon the British Government than upon their own people; but his arguments had no effect.<sup>1</sup>*

S. Gopal also refers to B. G. Kher and C. Rajagopalachari, the Chief Ministers of Bombay and Madras, respectively. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, had advised the Bombay Governor Lord Brabourne in a letter: "My advice to you for what it is worth, would be, here and elsewhere, to play for time and to miss no

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1. Sarvepally Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru—A Biography*, Vol. I, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 226-230.

*chance of impressing Kher and his colleagues with a sense of their own importance and of the necessity for standing on their own legs.*'' Gopal further quotes what Lord Erskine, the Governor of Madras, 'a diehard Tory himself', recorded about Rajagopalachari: 'In fact, he is even too much of a Tory for me, for though I may not go back twenty years, he wishes to go back two thousand and to run India as it was run in the time of King Asoka.''<sup>2</sup>

The first issue on which the Congress ministries and the left movement clashed was the release of political prisoners and keeping in abeyance the repressive laws. In many provinces, including Bombay and Madras, repressive actions against political workers were revived. Without inhibition the Congress governments resorted to such measures as suppression of leftist newspapers and printing presses which was the order of the day under the British. Instead of releasing political prisoners, the Congress governments put more inside jails.

Not only the activists of the left parties and the Congress but also Congress committees (including leaders like Nehru and Bose) raised their voice against these actions. But that did not make any effect. The Congress ministers continued to act according to their whims with the open support of Gandhi. Nehru acquiesced in it in the name of 'Congress discipline'. 'We cannot agitate against ourselves', he said.

But facing these and other repressive actions, the agitations and struggles of workers, peasants and students were advancing. Communists and socialists were ceaselessly working to give these struggles an organized form, thereby strengthening the anti-imperialist front. Many Congress committees too participated in these activities.

The strike launched by the workers of a British-owned textile mill in Kanpur in July 1937 for increased wages and for recognition of their union was a brilliant example of such struggles. Although the Communists and Socialists were in the forefront organizing and guiding the strike, the local Congress Committee played an active

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.

role in it. Consequently, it developed into a general strike of all workers in and around Kanpur. Under its pressure, the U.P. Government appointed an enquiry committee with Rajendra Prasad as Chairman to go into the demands of the workers. The report it submitted conceded many demands of the workers.

The Kanpur strike became a model for workers' actions throughout the country. It also helped to make anti-imperialists all over India aware of the outcome if communists, socialists and ordinary Congressmen stood united in serving and helping the workers. Following this, there was a wave of strike struggles all over the country under the pressure of which Congress governments in many states appointed committees to enquire into workers' problems and demands. Feeling the wind of change, many capitalists conceded the demands of the workers to avoid strikes. There were others who were not prepared to follow this path. In those industries workers struck work which was supported by all political parties including the Congress, compelling the Congress governments to take action to make the capitalists concede the workers' demands. More than 50 percent of the strikes in 1937-39 were partly or fully successful.

These strikes were reflected in the number as well as in the membership of trade unions which showed a big increase. The number of unions went up from 241 in 1936 to 562 in 1939 and the membership from 268,000 to 390,000. The increase was mainly in Bengal, Madras Punjab and U.P. Among the trade unions it was the AITUC under the leftist leadership that took great strides. Its 71 affiliated unions with 51,600 members in May 1936 rose to 198 unions with 348,000 members by February 1940. On the other hand, the National Trade Union Federation and its affiliated unions led by the moderate were weakened. Fearing isolation from the working class its leadership decided in January 1938 to merge their organizations with the AITUC.

This advance of the working class flabbergasted the Congress ministers and other right-wing leaders. In order to stop this advance, they started taking repressive actions, which was at its worst in Bombay. Apart from lathi-charges and other acts of repression, they prepared a bill incorporating most undemocratic provisions

with regard to recognition of trade unions. Strikes against this "black Act" and in defence of the immediate demands of the workers became widespread. The impact of these actions was felt in the Congress as well. Not only the ordinary Congress workers and local Congress committees but also the provincial committees came out against the approach of the Congress ministers.

This was also a period of peasant agitations and struggles. The elections to the provincial legislatures were held within a year of the formation of All-India Kisan Sabha. As a result of the activities of the Kisan Sabha, and also because of the declarations made by the Congress, thousands of activists had entered in the midst of the peasants. Even from among the ranks of the peasantry thousands of militant workers had started rising. Mass meetings, demonstrations and marches were held all over the country demanding the Congress ministries to reduce rent, scale down debt burdens and stop evictions as assured in the Congress election manifesto and in the Faizpur resolution. The Kisan Sabha membership rose from 600,000 in May 1938 to 800,000 in 1939.

It must be noted that there was fundamental difference between this new peasant upsurge and the one witnessed earlier under Gandhi's leadership. It was as part of the national movement under the bourgeois leadership that peasants went into action when Gandhi gave a call. It was true that there were tens of thousands of militant workers among them. But Gandhi was not prepared to fan their fighting spirit into a revolutionary fire. On the contrary, the Gandhian method of struggle in those days which was anchored on "non-violence", was an attempt to tie down the peasantry to the confines of bourgeois nationalism. In contrast to this, an independent organization (the Kisan Sabha) of a revolutionary class had emerged now, which though cooperating with the bourgeois national movement, was functioning independent of it and making its own contributions to the anti-imperialist movement. Like the working class, the peasantry had adopted as their own the red flag, May Day, etc., which are the symbols of socialist revolution. On such matters they showed no hesitation in coming into clash with the bourgeois leadership of the Congress. As a matter of fact, the growth of the Kisan Sabha in the provinces where the Congress



ministries were in office and the role played by ordinary Congressmen and the Congress committees at the lower level in its growth had disturbed the Congress ministers and the right-wing Congress leaders. So, the higher Congress committees mounted a political attack on the Kisan Sabha. They directed that Congressmen should not participate in the activities of the Kisan Sabha. They asserted that the leadership being given by the Kisan Sabha and its activists in organizing resistance to the violence 'let loose by the Zamindars or the big landlords was "against the creed of non-violence of the Congress"'. Not satisfied with this political attack, they unhesitatingly took actions against the activists of the Kisan Sabha using the provisions of existing repressive laws.

However, they realized that this alone could not contain the peasant movement. Therefore they tried to placate the peasants by conceding some of their demands and making preparations for legislations to this effect, which went in parallel to the repressive actions. Thus in many provinces the Congress governments appointed committees to enquire and report on legislative measures to be introduced with a view to ending Zamindari and other landownership systems.

The reports of most of these committees were extremely moderate in content. Moreover the Second World War broke out and the Congress ministries resigned before initiating legislative work based on these reports. Thus, these reports did not benefit the peasantry in any way. However, it became clear that the peasants, like the working class, could form their own organizations and agitate and fight under the banner of these organizations compelling the Congress ministries to take actions favourable to them. This brought out another important face of the anti-imperialist front.

The All-India Students Federation which was founded in 1936 under the leadership of Communist and Congress Socialists also made similar progress in the year following the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces. For examples, its membership increased from 40,000 in 1938 to 100,000 in 1939. This progress of the students movement—yet another face of the anti-imperialist front—was achieved against the wishes of the right-wing Congress leadership and in spite of its opposition.

### III. Ministries and the People

The existence of the Congress ministries which took office in July 1937 and the non-Congress ministries in the Congress minority provinces and also the 'interim' ministries which were in power in the Congress majority provinces before the Congress decided to accept office enabled the people to compare the Congress and non-Congress ministries. These non-Congress ministries functioned more or less the same way the Congress ministers functioned as in charge of certain departments allocated to them in the provinces in accordance in with the 1919 reforms Act. The 'interim' ministries in the Congress majority provinces which were in power for a few weeks were also of the same type. Therefore, the coming into power of the Congress ministries in Congress majority provinces in July and its spread to other provinces subsequently had been generally considered as the beginning of a new stage in the history of Indian politics.

For about 18 years after Gandhi took over the leadership, the Congress had been functioning as an organized opposition to the British government. With the emergence of the Swaraj Party, the Congress decided to extend its role of opposition to the legislature. In 1930 it gave up the parliamentary programme and became an opposition party functioning only outside the legislature. A party which had been thus functioning continuously as an opposition now in the legislature, now outside the legislature, had now taken office in some provinces.

On a number of counts there were differences between the Congress ministers and other ministers who had taken office now. Some of these differences were conspicuous. For example, the Congress decided that its ministers should not draw a salary exceeding Rs. 500 in deference to the resolution adopted at the Karachi session. This was less than the amount drawn by the non-Congress ministers in other provinces and the interim ministers in the Congress majority provinces. Further, the Congress ministers had followed the Congress discipline and Gandhian way of life including habitually wearing Khadi. This made them distinct from other ministers and created the impression that they took office representing the *daridra narayans* (poor).

A more basic change that had come about was that it was made clear that though each ministry was functioning to conduct the administration in a particular province, it had to function as part of an all-India organization and subject to its leadership and direction. The Congress ministries had a common perspective and a common programme giving clear and concrete directions in their day-to-day functioning. There was a central organizational leadership to supervise their functioning and to rectify the mistakes they might commit in their functioning. This central organizational leadership had the authority and capability to reprimand and even to dismiss any ministry or minister who disobeyed its directives. No non-congress ministry now in power or an earlier ministry was subject to such a control.

Parties opposed to the Congress as well as the British newspapers strongly criticized the functioning of the provincial ministries under such a centralized political leadership. They contended that it was undemocratic for an individual or organization outside a province to be vested with powers to interfere in the affairs of a ministry in that province. The Congress leaders replied that the main political question before India was that of the administration of the whole country and not that how each province had to be administered. The real question was how the administration of the whole country including that at the Centre should be transferred from the British to the Indians and how to effectively carry on the struggle for the transfer of administration. The Congress had taken over power in those provinces where it had commanded a majority in the legislature only as part of the process of organizing the people as a whole for the purpose.

The non-Congress ministries in other provinces had no such perspectives and no such central leadership to control and guide them. As distinct from them, the ministers of the Congress who had adopted the political objective of unifying the whole organization, perspective and method of struggle must submit themselves to a centralized discipline.

The Congress which decided to exercise full control over its ministries evolved a form of organization suited for this purpose. Before the elections it had formed a Parliamentary Board to

nominate the candidates to contest elections and to carry on the organizational work in connection with the elections. After the elections it formed a Parliamentary Sub-committee consisting of Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Abul Kalam Azad to control the ministries and to give them guidance in their activities.

The very constitution of the Parliamentary Sub-committee with Patel as chairman and with Rajendra Prasad, a well-known right-wing leader, as a member, needs special mention. It was during the presidency of Nehru, a known leftist, that the Parliamentary Board was formed with a rightist majority and with no place for Nehru in it. This Board was to control the functioning of the ministries. This was a clear evidence to show the correlation of forces inside the Congress. Nehru to attract the masses and secure their votes, and Patel to control the ministries after winning the elections—such was the division of labour inside the Congress.

Although Nehru was not a member of the Parliamentary Board, he was a force to be reckoned with in the formation of the ministries and in their functioning. Durga Das describes how the choice of the Chief Minister was made in U.P., the home province of Nehru.

*(Pandit) Pant told me one day of how his Ministry came to be formed. Purushottamdas Tandon was senior to Pant but was dedicated to the cause of Indian Sanskriti (culture) which appeared to Nehru and Rafi a reactionary outlook. Tandon was senior to Nehru too, and in fact was among the few who called him by his first name. Rafi manoeuvred to get Tandon to accept the Speakership of the U.P. Assembly and thus cleared the way for Pant.....to take over as Chief Minister. Rafi, on his part, told me how he had helped to insulate the Pant Ministry against "the irritable criticism and interference of the unpredictable Nehru". Pant and he waited on Nehru at his residence in Allahabad and sought his blessings for the induction of Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit in the Ministry. Nehru, who doted on his younger sister, readily agreed. This plan did succeed to a very great extent, but still Nehru could not help an occasional outburst.<sup>3</sup>*

With the formation of ministries Nehru began to drift away from

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3. Durga Das, *India: From Curzon to Nehru and After*, London, Collins, 1969, p.184

his colleagues. He was not able to reconcile himself with the functioning of the ministries controlled by Patel and other right-wing leaders. Sometimes he publicly expressed his sentiments in this regard. For example, Durga Das has recorded an incident in which Nehru got infuriated at a meeting when Pant's peon entered clad in his official uniform. He was restive of many omissions and commissions of the Congress ministries. He had noted a tendency in the Congress ministers to be on good terms with the British civil officials rather than considering the ministry as an instrument in the struggle against the administrative system imposed by the British. Nehru's fury at the official uniform of Pant's peon was symbolic of his opposition to this tendency.

If this was the plight of Nehru, it is needless to mention that of the ordinary Congressmen. People had great expectations from the Congress leaders after they assumed ministership as the spokesmen and representatives of the *daridra narayans*.

*The expectations of the populace were pitched in a high key. When Zemindars (big landlords) were almost all defeated in the elections, a big revolution which had already been in full swing, received an added impetus in the Zemindars for the revision of old tenures and taxes. Agrarian relief, scaling down debts, removal of intermediaries in cultivation, restriction of the extent of lands possessed by absentee landlords, abolition of illegal exactions.....these were the batch of Reforms which the popular ministers had to address themselves to.*<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the people had expected that many of the demands raised by the peasantry before and after the formation of the Kisan Sabha could be realized with the emergence of the Congress ministries.

The Communist Party, Congress Socialist Party and the left-wing Congressmen tried to give an organized form to these expectations that arose among the peasants, workers and other labouring masses. Attempts were made to make the Congress implement a programme for social transformation. They consciously utilized the freedom of activities which became available with the

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4. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55. A number of items such as total prohibition in the list of Sitaramayya have been left out here.

formation of the Congress ministries to organize mass agitations and to form trade unions and peasant organizations. They transformed the very existence of the ministries under the command of Sardar Patel into conditions for the growth of left movement. They came forward to raise the demand that the promises made to the people in the election manifesto and other official documents of the congress must be fulfilled.

*This led to serious clashes. The leftist and the ordinary Congressmen had started feeling that the Congress leaders who had now become ministers were not functioning in accordance with the promises formally given by the Congress. From the incident narrated by Durga Das it must be understood that even Nehru had shared this feeling. S. Gopal stated that having understood that he would not be able to reconcile himself with the political atmosphere arising out of the formation of Congress ministries, Nehru 'virtually opted out of the day-to-day activities of the domestic politics' and engaged himself in developments outside India.<sup>5</sup>*

The Congress governments freely used the provisions of those very repressive laws which the British government had been using against the Congress earlier, against the activists of mass organizations. Protests against these actions came not only from the ranks of the Congress but also from certain Congress committees in the different provinces.

In sum, the formation of the Congress ministries at one and the same time helped the growth of the bourgeois as well as of the left revolutionary forces fighting against the bourgeoisie. It also helped each of them to formulate their respective strategy for anti-imperialist struggles. For the first time in the history of the Congress and of Indian politics, there emerged a bourgeois strategy of bargaining with the imperialists both by making use of the administrative machinery to an extent and rallying the people under a well trained centralized leadership as well as a leadership (Patel and others) to put this strategy into practice. On the other side, a leftist political force basing itself on the strategy of revolutionary struggles against

the Congress strategy of bargain began to emerge. Nehru who aspired to remain on the side of these revolutionary forces but kept himself away from the conflicts between these two forces for want of mental strength was used by Patel and his cohorts as an ornament that could be placed at the top of their organization. The left forces which were uncompromisingly opposing the right-wing strategy of bargain with the British imperialists found another prominent leftist leader—Subhas Bose—to stand with them at least for the time being. It was in the background of an impending clash between the left forces with Nehru and Bose on their side, and the right-wing leadership under Patel and Rajendra Prasad that the next annual session of the Congress was held in Haripura.

#### **IV. Towards Crisis**

The Haripura session of the Congress was held in February 1938 in the shadow of a political crisis that arose from the resignation of Bihar Chief Minister Srikrishna Sinha and U.P. Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant. The resignation was a sequel to the refusal of the Governors to concur with the decisions of the cabinets of Bihar and U.P. to release political prisoners. The question arose before the delegates to the session whether this political crisis would remain confined to these provinces. Doubts were expressed whether the assessment of the political situation made by the Congress at the time of formation of the ministries following the political-legal controversy that lasted for three months was correct, whether the Governors were not interfering with the functioning of the ministries, as feared earlier and if they were, whether it was not proper for the Congress leadership to direct other Congress Chief Ministers also to resign and lead a country-wide struggle.

A situation was developing all over the country, which might turn this into a crucial political issue. In Bengal, well-known for the valour and sacrifice displayed in the anti-imperialist struggles, thousands of political workers were behind the bars. The government there did not take any action to release them. Instead, it was resorting to fresh repressive measures. Similarly, a considerable number of political prisoners from Bengal and other provinces had

been banished to the Andaman Islands. The Central government did not even consider the question of releasing them. This naturally created deep discontent and unrest among the people throughout the country. It was in this context that the Congress governments of Bihar and U.P. decided to release the political prisoners under their jurisdiction. The interference of the Governors drew a storm of protest from the people.

However, neither the Congress nor the Congress Chief Ministers wanted to bring the matters to a head. On the contrary, they adopted an attitude which would facilitate a compromise. Durga Das, who was the Lucknow correspondent of the Statesman, has put it on record that the U.P. Chief Minister Pant had drafted his resignation letter very carefully making sure that it did not impair his relationship with the Governor and that he (Durga Das) helped Pant to soften the tone and contents of the draft.

The resolution adopted by the Haripura session of the Congress had made reference to an incident which drew objections from the Governor of U.P. In order to bring out the attitude of the Congress leadership towards the issue involved, the relevant part of the resolution is given below.

*On behalf of the U.P. Governor it has been stated that the demonstration organised to welcome the Kakori prisoners and the speeches delivered by some of them had interfered with the policy of gradual release of political prisoners. The Congress has always discouraged unseemly demonstrations and other objectionable activities. The demonstrations and speeches referred to by the U.P. Governor were strongly disapproved by Mahatma Gandhi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the Congress, had similarly taken immediate notice of the indiscipline which was thus betrayed. Nor were they ignored by the Ministers. As a result of these corrective steps public opinion rapidly changed and even the persons concerned came to realise their mistake.*<sup>6</sup>

The resolution was an open admission that the objections raised by the Governor were not entirely baseless as well as an expression of the readiness on the part of the Congress leadership to carry on

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6. Zaidi and Zaidi, *op. cit.*, p. 437



matters according to the wishes of the Governors. The conciliatory attitude expressed in the resolution was in fact an appeal to the Governors not to interfere with the functioning of the ministers. Furthermore, this conciliatory attitude would not be limited to the question of the release of political prisoners. As we have repeatedly pointed out earlier, the Congress leadership was striving at a compromise with the British authorities on all the issues including the Federal system at the Centre in such a way as to protect maximally its own class interests.

However, the British authorities were aware of the fact that a considerable section within the Congress was working uncompromisingly against this conciliatory attitude. The actions taken by the Govenmots of Bihar and U.P. were designed to test the strength of this section as well as the willingness of the leadership to resist it and continue this conciliatory attitude. The resolution adopted at the Haripura session had, moreover, shown that the leadership was prepared for compromise disregarding the leftists. The resolution had specifically stated that the "Congress Ministers have more than once declared their determination to take adequate action in the matter of violent crime."

Consequently, soon after the Haripura session ministerial crises in Bihar and U.P. were brought to an end. The ministers who had resigned resumed office and statements and counter-statements were exchanged between the ministers and the Governors for this purpose. But the Haripura session marked the beginning of an intense struggle within the Congress on several issues including the question of the release of political prisoners.

*The commotions and the convulsions in national thought during the two preceding years were largely conditioned by the concepts of Socialism and Communism which travelled afresh into the country, the conflicts that arose in 1938 must largely be put down as the off-shoots of the earlier antagonisms that had been raging indeed for some years past in the Congress annals. Here was Gandhi who though not a member of the Congress was still the power behind the throne, the fountain spring of all ideas of constructive nationalism and the architect of that mighty barrage which helped to stem successfully the tide of violence. There were*

*the younger folks who felt impatient over the slow progress of the ideas rooted in non-violence and were hard put to discover short cuts to vertical heights or make long jumps over impassable gulfs. The formation of Ministries in particular did not achieve that millennium nor did the popular governments help to hasten the advent of that far off divine event, the emancipation of the Kisans.<sup>8</sup>*

The growth of the Kisan Sabha became an issue of heated controversy in the Haripura session. The fact that its leadership was not with the Congress but with the Communists and Socialists agitated the right-wing Congress leaders. They launched a heavy attack on the Kisan Sabha for it was functioning independent of the Congress discipline and was hoisting red flag in its meeting and demonstrations. The resolution adopted at the Haripura session stated:

*In view of the difficulties that have arisen in regard to the Kisan Sabhas and other organizations in some parts of India, the Congress desires to clarify the position and state its attitude in regard to them. The Congress has already fully recognized the right of Kisans to organize themselves in peasant unions. Nevertheless it must be remembered that the Congress itself is in the main a Kisan organization and as contacts with the masses have increased, vast number of Kisans have joined it and influenced its policy. The Congress must, and has in fact, stood for these Kisan masses and championed their claims, and has worked for the independence of India which must be based on the freedom from exploitation of all our people.... While fully recognizing the right of the Kisans to organize Kisan Sabhas, the Congress cannot associate itself with any activities which are incompatible with the basic principles of the Congress and will not countenance any of the activities of those Congressmen who as members of the Kisan Sabhas help in creating an atmosphere hostile to Congress principles and policy. The Congress, therefore, calls upon provincial Congress Committees to bear the above in mind and in pursuance of it take suitable action wherever call for.<sup>9</sup>*

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8. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p72

9. Zaidi and Zaidi, *op. cit.*, pp. 438-439.

It becomes obvious from the resolution that the conflict between the left and right wings of the Congress was getting intense and that the problem of the relationship between the Kisan Sabha and the Congress arose as a symbol of this conflict. The complaint of the right-wing was that the leftists were going ahead with programmes, which were not to their liking, of propagating the ideologies of Socialism and Communism among the people and organizing peasants in organizations independent of the Congress based on these ideologies. The resolution was adopted after a heated debate with a majority of votes.

Kisan Sabhas had been organized under the leadership of the leftists in all provinces where the Congress ministries were in power. The agitations, struggles and demonstrations conducted by them under the red flag were a source of annoyance not only to the big landlord and the British rulers but also to the Congress ministers. It had become such a strong movement that it could march ahead even if it was opposed by all the right-wing Congress leaders including Gandhi. This was the case not only with the Kisan Sabha but also of the trade unions and students organizations. The message of socialism and communism had spread extensively in these movements. The Communist and Socialist parties had been growing in strength capable of leading them. Utilizing the freedom of speech and press and other civil liberties in the provinces where the Congress ministries were in power, the left parties were also engaged in publishing newspapers and journals and organizing meetings and demonstrations.

Changes were taking place in the old revolutionaries giving a fresh impetus to these developments. A considerable section of the prisoners in the different jails in India, including in the Andaman Islands, were those who believed in the politics of bomb. Acquaintance with the communist and socialist literature and world political developments including the rapid progress achieved by the Soviet Union made them rethink politically. They began to realize that the kind of revolution that had taken place in Russia and for which many other countries were preparing, would take place in India only by organizing the different sections of the people and making them politically conscious, rather than by physically

eliminating the enemies of the people. Many who later became prominent Communist leaders were those who had adopted the ideology of communism at this stage.

The statement signed by the former bomb politicians renouncing the bomb Politics was interpreted by the right-wing Congress leadership as evidence to the increasing influence of the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence. It was, in fact, a victory of socialism and communism because it showed that the revolutionary forces inside and outside the Congress had begun adopting the perspective of working on the basis of organized revolutionary strength of the working class, peasantry and other toiling people.

It was as part of the approach of the right-wing leadership to stem the upswing of the left forces that they decided to install the leftist Subhas Bose as the president of the Congress at the Haripura session. We have seen that the right-wing leadership was able to implement their own policies under the shadow of Nehru who had been placed as an ornament at the top of the Congress continuously for two years. They hoped that they would be able to perform the same feat under the presidentship of Bose as well. And this calculation was not an entirely misplaced one. Bose did not cause any "trouble" to the right-wing leadership during his presidency.

But by the time of the next session, the Congress was once again heading towards a split. The fierce controversy that raged in the Haripura session on the question of the relationship between the Kisan Sabha and the Congress was the first indication of the storm that was gathering.

## V. Princely States and the Congress

Another important issue which came to be hotly debated in the Haripura session was the attitude of the Congress towards the struggles for democracy in the princely states. As in the case of many other issues, the left stood firmly against the attitude of the right-wing leadership on this issue. But unlike on most other issues, certain non-left sections also expressed dissatisfaction over the stand taken by the right-wing on this matter.

As we have noted earlier, the official position of the Congress was that it would not participate in the popular struggles for

democracy in the princely states. The contention of those who formulated this policy was that since the princes were sympathetic to the struggle against the British rulers, the Congress should not function in a manner that disconcerted them. But with the development of the bourgeoisie in the princely states as it did in British India, activities for establishing the democratic principles and values which were upheld by the Congress began to take place in these states at least on a low key. Just like the Congress demanded transfer of power from the British rulers to Indian bourgeoisie, so the demand came from the princely states that the autocratic rule be ended and bourgeois democratic system introduced.

Basically, the bourgeois leadership of the Congress should have been sympathetic to this demand. But considering the consequences of joining hands with democratic movements in the princely states, the Congress turned its back and adopted the policy of 'non-interference in the internal affairs of the princely states'.

A change came about in this in the Round Table Conferences and in the years following the Conferences. It became clear that the princes constituted one of the main forces to support the British rejecting the national demand raised by the Congress. Undoubtedly, those who would 'represent' the autocratic princely states in the Federation would be the henchmen of the rulers of these states. Therefore, in order for the Congress to achieve its objective, it was essential that there must be a basic change in the administrative set-up in the princely states. So, the Indian bourgeoisie had to raise the slogan of responsible governments in the states along with the demand of full independence for India.

It was in these circumstances that democratic organizations—*Praja Mandals*—working for the establishment of democracy in the princely states emerged. An all India conference was convened in July 1936 at Karachi with a view to providing the various *Praja Mandals* scattered all over the country a uniform perspective. An all-India organization of the states' organizations was formed at the conference. The leaders of that organizations appealed to the Congress for moral and practical assistance to the struggles being conducted in the states since they looked upon the Congress as an organization which represented their aspirations.

*Although the democratic movements in the princely states were under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, the approach of the leaders of these movements was different from that of bourgeois leadership of the Congress towards the autocratic rules in the states. They believed that they deserved full support from a movement like the Congress. On the contrary, the right-wing leadership of the Congress feared that if they antagonized the rulers of the states by giving direct support to democratic struggles in the states, that would weaken the national front against the British rulers.*

This difference in approach was found reflected in the top leadership of the Congress. Not only Nehru and Bose but also those right-wing Congress leaders who had at least a remote relation with the princely states were of the opinion that the Congress should reconsider its attitude towards the struggles in the princely states. As a result, the AICC meeting held in Calcutta in October 1937 adopted a resolution declaring support to the struggles of the people of Mysore against repression.

However, this was severely criticized by Gandhi who maintained that although the struggles of the people of the princely states for responsible governments were just, the direct participation of the Congress would do harm to these struggles. The Communists, Socialists and other leftists showed that Gandhi's argument in fact amounted to conceding the contention of the autocrats in the states that the Congress was an "outsider" to their states. They also pointed out that since it had become clear that the British were trying to weaken the country-wide freedom struggle by differentiating between "British India" and "Indian India", responsible governments in the princely states should also be brought within the definition of *Purna Swaraj*.

At least on this issue a section of the right-wing leadership joined hands with the left. They joined the left forces to raise protest against the draft resolution prepared by the Working Committee to be placed before the Subjects Committee of the Congress at Haripura. The draft had prohibited formation and functioning of Congress Committees in the states. Finally a "compromise" resolution was adopted at the Haripura session which included the following paragraph.

*The Congress therefore directs that, for the present, Congress Committees in the states shall function under the direction and control of the Congress Working Committee and shall not engage in parliamentary activity or launch on direct action in the name and under the auspices of the Congress. Internal struggles of the people of the states must not be undertaken in the name of Congress. For this purpose independent organizations should be started and continued where they exist already within the state.*<sup>10</sup>

That this 'compromise' resolution did not have an iota of compromise would be clear to any one who had read it. Open struggle and parliamentary work are two facets of political work. The compromise here was that the right-wing leadership had no objection to forming Congress committees sans these two facets of political work. This meant that no "outsider" should interfere with the internal affairs of the princely states, that Congress Committees are "outside" organizations for the princely states and that they should keep aloof from the conflicts between the subjects and rulers of these states. Thus, under the veil of 'compromise' the Haripura resolution re-affirmed the attitude of the right-wing leadership towards the struggles of the people in the princely states.

It was but natural that there was a powerful section among the delegates to the Haripura session which was opposed to this resolution. Whereas the Kisan Sabha Congress relation was an issue on which the left and right confronted each other, on the question of the princely states a section of the right-wing leadership together with the left raised a challenge to the approach of Gandhi and his associates. However, the resolution introduced by the right-wing leadership was adopted with a majority of votes.

In the months that followed the movements for responsible government forged ahead in many states. In Mysore, Cochin, Travancore, Kashmir and in the states in Orissa, Gujarat and other regions the slogan of responsible government reverberated and the struggle for it assumed different forms. For the first time since the formation of the Congress various princely states became the scene of fight against autocratic rule and for responsible government.

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10. Zaidi and Zaidi, *op. cit.* p 434

Two distinct approaches emerged within and outside the Congress on how to handle the new situation.

As in the case with the struggle against the British, the right-wing leadership adopted the policy of mobilizing the people and utilizing the force thus gained to bargain with the autocratic rulers in the states. As distinct from this, the leftists started working with the perspective of leading the people of the states along the path of revolutionary struggles against autocratic rule. Depending on the correlation of forces of the right and the left, either of the paths was adopted in each state.

The State of Travancore was a brilliant example of the revolutionary path. There an organized working class movement and left parties based on it were growing for more than decade. These left movements had close links with similar movements in the neighbouring state of Cochin and the Malabar region of British India. Further, there was a state *Praja* movement led by rightists but in which leftist actively participated. Following the Haripura session of the Congress, a bourgeois democratic movement called the 'State Congress' came to exist there. Demands were raised for the establishment of a fully responsible government in the state. The organized working class in the state actively participated in the struggles waged to realize this demand. The agitations organized by the State Congress in 1938 for responsible government and the political strike launched by the working class as an independent class as part of this agitation were important events in the political history of Travancore. The agitation for responsible government transformed itself into a democratic struggle in which the working class led by the left parties played a significant role.

The struggle conducted in the state of Rajkot in Gujarat under the direct leadership of Sardar Patel with the blessings of Gandhi was quite distinct from this. Neither an organized working class nor a leftist movement was there in that state and consequently the movement was completely in the hands of the rightists. The ruler of the state and Sardar Patel struck a compromise which was thrown to the wind by the ruler before the ink was dry on the document forcing Gandhi to launch a fast in protest against this.

The situation in Kashmir was different from both these cases.



Although bereft of any working class or left movement, there was a bourgeois leadership which had imbibed, to an extent, the left ideology, which later became well-known as the National Conference. Although leaders of the National Conference shared the thinking of the poor and middle classes in the towns and country side, they were not able to organize the people on a revolutionary basis with a working class outlook. All the weaknesses emanating from this could be found reflected in the activities of the National Conference and its leaders like Sheikh Abdullah. But they did not try to bargain with the ruler in the state and gain their political objectives as did the Gandhian leadership in Raikot. They adopted the path of organizing massive struggles of the people which also found reflected in the later day politics in the state.

Struggles for responsible government broke out in many more states. But the Congress was incapable of giving a centralized leadership to these struggles. The resolution adopted at the Haripura session to the effect that the Congress was an 'outside' organization to the princely states and that Congress committees should not interfere with the internal affairs of the states cast shadow over the democratic movements in the states.

Despite this, a section of the right-wing leadership of the Congress was forced by circumstances to remain in the forefront of the *Praja* movement. What forced them to take this stand was the realization on the part of the Indian bourgeoisie that it was essential to end the autocratic rule in the princely states to defeat the game of the British rulers and also the desire of the bourgeoisie in each state to share power in their respective states.

## VI. Ministries and the Rivals

The right-wing bourgeois leadership of the Congress used the ministries in such a way as to make use of the growing anti-imperialist trend to serve its own class interests. The ministries tried to implement the main slogans of the anti-imperialist front, viz., release of political prisoners, withdrawal of the repressive laws, and legislation against the interests of big landlords. In the process they often came in conflict with the Governors. In addition, they also initiated steps towards introducing educational reforms,

transformation of Indian economy through industrialization and prohibition of intoxicating drinks. The formulation of an educational system linking education with physical labour and the formation of the National Planning Committee to introduce economic planning in post-independence India deserve special mention. These were the initial efforts made to tell the people the shape of things to come in the administration as well as in economic and educational fields in independent India.

However, the Congress did not have an undisputed all-India representation as claimed by it; it was a minority in five out of eleven provinces. Of these five provinces, only in Assam and the NWF Province could it form ministries with the support of certain other political groups and individuals. In Sind, the Allah Baksh ministry which was formed after the fall of the ministry headed by Gulam Hussain Hidayatullah had the indirect support of the Congress. Therefore it introduced certain items of the Congress programme. The governments of the remaining two provinces of Punjab and Bengal were hostile to the Congress.

These two non-Congress ministries did not command a majority in the legislatures. The Unionist Party of Sikandar Hyat Khan in Punjab and the Krishak Praja party of Fazlul Huq in Bengal were in power in these two provinces with the support of certain other parties. Since both of them were Muslim majority provinces, Jinnah made an attempt to bring the governments and the ruling parties under the influence of the Muslim League. But none of them yielded to Jinnah. Fazlul Huq even tried to get the support of the Congress. Although the Bengal Pradesh Congress was in favour of it, it had to reject it because the national leadership of the Congress was opposed to it. In spite of the fact that the Congress moved to the opposition, Huq did not go to the League. Similarly, the Hyat Khan ministry remained independent of both the Congress and the League.

The situation in India as a whole was changing rapidly. As we have indicated earlier, efforts made to form a Congress-League ministry in U.P. failed. The rejection of Huq's request for support by the Congress created serious repercussions in the League leadership. Huq's appeal to Jinnah to come to terms with the Congress was turned down. Jinnah said that he too desired a

settlement with Congress, but that it became impossible because the Congress was trying to compel the British to accept its demand and leave the Muslims in the lurch.<sup>11</sup>

The political developments in India during and after the elections of 1937 prepared the ground for the rise of the Muslim League which was one of the several parties of the Muslims, as the sole representative of the Muslim community. Following the refusal of the Congress to give a share to the Muslims in the U.P. ministry and to cooperate with the Huq ministry in Bengal, the Muslim League led by Jinnah started a powerful campaign against the 'anti-Muslim attitude of the Congress'. The report of the Committee headed by the Nawab of Pirpur, appointed by the League to enquire into the "anti-Muslim measures taken by the Congress government in U.P." provided considerable motivation to the Muslims to rally behind the Muslim League. The 'Pirpur Report' was widely discussed by the Muslims all over India.

This was only the beginning. The alleged "anti-muslim policy" being followed by the Congress governments in other provinces created commotions among the Muslim masses. Propaganda was extensively conducted that if the national democratic set up as demanded by the Congress came to exist, the Muslims would be physically eliminated and that if that situation had to be avoided, the Muslims must set aside the differences among themselves and strengthen the League. The intention of those who let loose this propaganda was to raise the League to the position of a party of the Muslims as opposed to the 'Hindu political party', the Congress.

With this anti-Congress propaganda of the League, communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims and between the Sikhs and Muslims began to erupt. These communal clashes became the worst in 1940-1941 by which the Congress had left the provincial governments. The Muslim League had adopted a resolution in its Lahore session in March 1940 demanding an independent state of Pakistan incorporating Muslim majority provinces in India.

Another event which took place in the same period which needs particular mention was the anti-Hindi agitation in the Madras

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<sup>11</sup> R. Coupland, quoted in R. C. Majumdar (ed), *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. II, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1959, p. 547.

province where a Congress ministry was in office. The people were agitated over the decision of the ministry to teach compulsorily in the schools Hindi which the Congress considered as the "symbol of Indian nationalism". The Justice Party which was defeated in the 1937 elections tried to fan the anti-Hindi sentiments of the people and turn it against the Congress. The message of anti-Hindi agitation reached the people who were already agitated over Prohibition and the newly introduced sales tax to make good the deficit caused by it. This was the beginning of the anti-North India slogan raised by the Dravida Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam later on.

The emergence of the Muslim League as an all-India force and the beginning of anti-Hindi agitation in Madras were pointers to the growth of certain new forces in Indian politics. Along with these, an anti-Congress wave was rising among the Sikhs, Christians, the depressed castes and others. Each of these sections was raising challenge in its own way to the claim made by the Congress that it was the sole representative of Indian people.

None of these parties and groups was against the declared objective of the Congress, viz., national independence and a democratic set-up in India. What turned sections of the people belonging to various religions and castes against the right-wing leadership of the Congress was the rights they were to enjoy in an independent democratic India. Therefore, it would be absurd to characterize any of them as 'lackeys of the British rulers' and enemies of national independence. That the British rulers succeeded in turning them individually and collectively against the Congress and in their own favour was beside the point. The division of the country into India and Pakistan in 1947 and the accompanying communal riots were the culmination of the British moves.

The origin of this was in the years 1937-1939. As power was transferred to the bourgeoisie, though it was confined to the provinces, dispute arose among the bourgeoisie belonging to different nationalities of the question of sharing the power thus transferred. It was this dispute and the communal riots that arose out of it and that finally led to the slogan of Pakistan and the direct action based on it.

There is another side of the picture. Here we are referring to the left political forces which had been supporting the objectives declared by the Congress and challenging its right-wing leadership while engaged themselves in practical activities for the realization of these objectives. We have already described the advance made by the left forces including the Communists and Socialists, its impact in the country, and the important position gained by the left outlook in the election manifesto and other official documents of the Congress. What follows are some instances which showed the natural results of these trends.

As we have mentioned earlier, the Communist Party of India which was reorganized in 1933-1934 was declared illegal in this period. A change in this situation came about when the Congress ministries came to power in the provinces. Since the Party was declared illegal by the Central government, the Congress governments in the provinces had no authority to lift the ban on it. However, they were able to release political prisoners including communists and Communist sympathizers and to provide them facilities to conduct meetings and publish newspapers and journals. This enabled known communists to work openly in the trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and other mass organizations and also to join the Congress and contest elections. These facilities were offered by the Congress governments in the provinces.

Using these facilities, the Communists began the publication of *National Front*, a weekly from Bombay and *New Age*, a monthly from Madras. The *National Front* was run by an editorial board consisting of the General Secretary and members of the Polit Bureau of the Party. The office of the journal became the legal office of the illegal Party. Prominent communist leaders could participate in the AICC meetings as delegates and as press correspondents. Thus, the ban on the Party remained only on paper.

Leaders of the Congress Socialist Party which was not banned, openly conducted their political activities. They published their journal *The Congress Socialist* from Bombay. On the basis of an understanding reached between these two parties they cooperated with each other in working in the Congress, AITUC, Kisan Sabha, Students Federation and other organizations.

It was true that differences also arose between them in the process of these activities. It was also true that these differences led to a split between them later on. But they were working together even at that stage on the basis of left unity

Before and immediately after the elections, the right-wing Congress leadership did not prevent the growth of these left forces in any way: they even helped them. But the situation had begun to change after the elections. We have referred earlier to the attack launched by the right-wing leadership against the activities of the leftists in the Kisan Sabha. However, the leadership at the time was not prepared to take things to an open split in the Congress, nor to take disciplinary actions against the leftists. On the contrary, they kept leftists Nehru and Bose at the presidency of the Congress continuously for three year. Things were moving, however, to a situation in which an open conflict between the left and right wings appeared inevitable. And the conflict did burst out at the Tripuri session of the Congress.

The developments that took place before and after the Tripuri session will be dealt with in the following chapter. It is necessary to point out here that parties of the ruling classes like the Muslim League on the one side and the left forces under the leadership of communists and socialists on the other, had started challenging the right-wing leadership of the Congress. The dispute between the former and the right-wing leadership of the Congress was over sharing the power in the future administrative set up and not over the form of the set up and the method of shaping it. The latter, on the other, opposed the right-wing leadership on the question of the method to be adopted to achieve independence as well as the social content of it.

# THE 1942 STRUGGLE

E. M. S. Namboodiripad

## I. The Cripps Mission

The fact that the Soviet Union and Britain were fighting together on one side in the war did not bring about any change in the British attitude towards India. As ever before, the British rulers were adamant in their stand of not conceding India's demand.

In this context, Prime Minister Churchill's speech in the British parliament in September 1941 needs special mention here. Earlier, the United States and Britain had jointly published a document, called the Atlantic Charter. It envisaged freedom for all peoples of the world to choose their own mode of governance and for those who had lost sovereignty to restore it. But Churchill stated that the Atlantic Charter would not apply to India. What emboldened him to take such a stand was his belief that there were serious differences of opinion among the different groups within the Congress as well as between the Congress and other political organisations in India. And this belief was not altogether baseless. For instance, it was well known that there were differences between the Congress and the colleagues of Subhas Bose and between these two on the one hand and the Communist and Socialist parties on the other. Further, there were differences within the Communist Party on the change that the nature of the war had undergone and within the Congress on the evaluation of the development that took place following the individual *satyagraha* movement. Added to these were the differences that existed between the Congress and the Muslim League and between them on the one hand and the liberal leaders on the other. The British government decided to cleverly utilise these differences.

The difference of opinion that existed among the Congress leaders need special mention. As we have seen earlier, twice after

the outbreak of the war the Congress had taken certain steps which were at variance with those taken by Gandhi. What created this gulf between Gandhi and the Congress leaders was the differences in the outlook of Gandhi who was holding fast the "means of unadulterated nonviolence" and those of the "practical politicians" like Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Patel and others in the Congress.

The Congress decided to launch individual *satyagraha* and to assign its leadership to Gandhi only because Britain refused to concede the demands raised by it even after a majority of the leaders adopted an attitude of willingness to cooperate with the British in their war efforts despite Gandhi's opposition.

The first year of individual *satyagraha* was coming to a close. Rajagopalachari and some other leaders demanded a review of the year's experience. Although about 2,000 *satyagrahis* were arrested, the movement did not yield any significant result. Moreover, opportunities were coming forth for fresh negotiations with the British rulers in the new situation created by the entry of the Soviet Union in the war. Accordingly, on the initiative of Rajagopalachari, the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution during the Christmas of 1941 expressing readiness to cooperate with the British in its war efforts.

Certain helpful moves came from the British also. Thus many top ranking Congress leaders including Nehru were released from prison. The situation of war once again changed basically with the Japanese attack on the United States' Pearl Harbour in December 1941.

Although the United States had taken an attitude openly in favour of Britain and France, it was not a participant in the war till December 1941. With the American entry in the war, the war now became one with the governments of the U. S., Britain and the Soviet Union along with the liberation movements of the German occupied countries in Europe on the one side fighting against the German and Italian Fascism and the Japanese militarism.

The surrender of France to Hitler, Japan's occupation of Indo-China as a gift from France and the occupation of other Asian countries following the declaration of war in December 1941 would have made it easy for Japan to enter India. It was the interest of



the United States also to create a political situation that would prevent such an eventuality. It occurred to the American rulers that the Churchill government's attitude towards India might turn out to be dangerous to the Allies, including America. They made this known to the rulers of Britain. They impressed upon the British that it was in the interest of the Allies to liberate those Asian countries which had fallen to Japan and also to prevent India from falling to it. By this, they were, in fact, trying to replace the crumbling Dutch-French-English imperialism by their own imperialist domination in a new form.

But whatever their intention, the U. S. move helped the bourgeois Congress leadership. America's generous political support, the publicity received through the American newspapers, the powerful anti-imperialist stand taken by the Soviet Union, and the sympathies of the neighbouring countries like China were all considered valuable assets by the Congress leaders.

It was in this situation that the Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang visited India. China was then fighting Japan. Because of their political weakness, they could not exert much pressure either on Britain or on the Indian government. But their visit with an open expression of sympathy to India's national demand gave a boost to the Congress policy of bargain.

This could not but leave an impact on the British rulers. They were disturbed and anxious over the fate of India following the Japanese occupation of Singapore. This also reinforced the pressure being exerted by president Roosevelt on the British Prime Minister Churchill. All in all, Britain was forced to take some action to change the Indian public opinion. It was in this background that the British government sent to India Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the war-time Cabinet and a sympathiser to the Indian national movement. The announcement in this regard created the impression that the British authorities were trying to renounce their hardline attitude towards India and to satisfy the Congress and other political parties in India. Such was the publicity the Cripps Mission received in the Indian and foreign press.

Even before Cripps set off to India a draft declaration had been prepared by the British government on India's future constitutional

set-up and on the changes that were to be introduced in the existing system during the war time. This draft document was kept a secret until Cripps reached India and held talks with the leaders of the different political parties. On behalf of the British government, Cripps claimed that he was trying to bring a settlement between the government and the representatives of the Indian people.

The declaration had been prepared in such a way as to make it appear progressive as compared to all the earlier declarations made by the government. It had been stated that the government would take steps to create "a new Indian Union which will have the full status of a Dominion". The objective was stated to be to enable India to achieve the "earliest possible realisation of self-government". The declaration specifically stated that in order to realise the objective, a constitution making body would be set up "immediately upon the cessation of hostilities".

Considering the policy declarations that the Congress had hitherto been making, this draft declaration should have been acceptable to it. But there were two important conditions included in the draft declaration. One of the conditions was that if one or more provinces were not prepared to join the Indian Union, such province or provinces would be free to frame a separate constitution and would have the same status as the Indian Union. The rulers of the princely states also would have the same right. The second condition was concerned with the minorities. The new constitution of the Indian Union and other provinces and states staying out of it would guarantee the assurances given earlier by the government to the Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Europeans, Anglo-Indians and other communities.

All these were relating to the constitution. Equally important was the problem of what was going to be done immediately. The British government desired and urged the effective participation of the different sections (parties and organisation) representing the interests of the Indian people on the functions of the governments of their own country, the British Commonwealth and the emergent United Nations. Cripps claimed that what was being visualised was an Indian national government with Dominion Status at least nominally.

The Cripps Mission was a big gain to the Muslim League, for most of the demands raised by the leaders of the League with regard to Pakistan had been accepted. Not only that all the guarantees given to the religious minorities had been honoured, the Muslim majority provinces were now given the freedom to stay away from the Indian Union and to form a separate nation by themselves. Furthermore, if the League would have a share in the Central government which was going to be formed in accordance with the Cripps proposals, it could strengthen itself utilising the new position in the government.

As for the Congress, the proposals seemed attractive in the beginning, but as discussions progressed it realised the underlying dangers. The provision contained in the proposal giving the right to the provinces and the princely states to stay away from the Indian Union disturbed them. But Rajagopalachari, Nehru, Patel and certain others were ready to accept the Cripps proposal even ignoring Gandhi's opposition to it (This was exactly what happened after the termination of the war) What was really unacceptable to them was the proposal relating to the change to be introduced immediately in the central government. Had the authorities been prepared to constitute immediately a national government at the Centre with the status of a Dominion along with the provision giving the right to the provinces to stay away from the Indian Union, the Cripps proposal would have been accepted in toto by all the Congress leaders except Gandhi.

The talks that took place at the different levels—between the Congress leaders and Cripps, among Cripps, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, among President Roosevelt's personal representative and the Indian and British leaders—revealed what exactly were the differences between the British government and the Congress. The latter insisted on its demand that the Viceroy's Executive Council should immediately start functioning as the national government with the status of a Dominion. But the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief would not budge an inch insofar as sharing their authority with others. Although Cripps and the U. S. representatives tried their best to make them accept the position, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-chief, who had the support of Churchill, remained adamant.

Thus failed the efforts to enlist the support of the Indian people in the war against the Fascist forces with the cooperation of Indian's popular leaders. Cripps returned to England empty handed.

## II. 'Quit India'

Even while Cripps' talks with Indian leaders were on, the situation in India's eastern borders was causing alarm to the Allied Powers and to the people. The Japanese forces were steadily advancing along the India-Burma road, conquering on their way the British possessions of Singapore, Burma, Malaya and the Andaman Islands. There were Japanese naval attacks in the Bay of Bengal. The eastern port cities of Vishakhapatnam and Kakinada came under Japanese bombardment. The government themselves had ordered destruction of certain establishments in Madras fearing Japanese invasion. In brief, there was an increasing probability of India coming under the attack of Japanese, like other Asian countries.

The Congress maintained that in order to be able to meet this threat a mere declaration about India's future was not enough and demanded immediate transfer of power, in whatever form, including that of the defence department to the representatives of the Indian people. The British rulers, on the other hand, held adamantly that they would not part with the control of such crucial departments as defence and home. Consequently, the Delhi talks broke off, which, in turn, caused great resentment and anger among the people. There was practically no one in India who was not infuriated by the stand taken by the British rulers, who were leading an army which were fleeing from the Japanese attacks, that they would not hand over the country to her own people, no matter even if they had to surrender it to Japan.

It may be recalled that it was also the time when one of the topmost national leaders, Subhas Bose, who had left India, had been raising the Indian National Army (INA) with Indians in the territories held by Japan to liberate India with the assistance of Japan. The Contempt towards the British army which were facing defeat after defeat together with the impression created in India that the INA led by Subhas Bose were planning to launch an offensive against the British rule in India aroused national emotions among

the people. It seemed to them that the opportunity was at hand to liberate themselves from the British rule.

These emotions were, in fact, contrary to the policies the Congress and other anti-imperialist organisations had been pursuing. They had been ceaselessly speaking to the Indian people for about a decade against the Fascist forces of Italy and Germany and Japanese militarism. They had been maintaining all along that an advance of the Fascist and the militarist forces would not set free the dependent countries; it would lead only independent countries to lose their freedom. They never entertained the illusion that India could be liberated with the assistance of Japan. On the contrary, they knew that a victory of Japan meant changing from one master to another. That was why they demanded that the British should transfer power to the Indian people and resist Japan with their support.

But the experience of the leaders who expressed readiness to lead the Indian people to fight Japan even at the cost of the creed of Gandhian non-violence posed the question before all the political parties, excepting Bose and his colleagues. What is to be done next? Different Congress leaders answered this question differently.

Gandhi had left Delhi right in midst of the discussions with Cripps. The proposals put forward by Cripps did not at all seem to him attractive. Referring to Britain's defeat in Malaya and Burma and their indifference to enlisting the support of the people which was an presently condition for avoiding the repetition of the defeat in India, Gandhi described the Cripps proposal as a "postdated cheque on a crashing bank". He regarded it an urgent task to take a strong action against the British rulers who were adamantly refusing to hand over India to her people. Accordingly, Gandhi drafted a resolution and sent it to the Working Committee which was to be met towards the end of April. He expressed the opinion that though the victory of the Axis Powers in the war appeared certain, Japan would leave India alone. In case an invasion took place, he expected "the people to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them".

Many members of the Working Committee, including Nehru and

Azad were not in agreement with Gandhi's ideas. They considered the idea of ejecting the British with the assistance of Japan absurd and thought it possible to get the adamant attitude of the British relaxed with the assistance of the world leaders like President Roosevelt, since an anti-Fascist front including China, the Soviet Union and the United States which were sympathetic to India had now been formed. Later a resolution to this effect was adopted by the AICC replacing the draft resolution submitted by Gandhi.

However, this hope was soon shattered. It became clear that neither Roosevelt nor other world leaders could intervene in the Indian affairs. Nor did they come forward to exert pressure on the British, since they were convinced that a transfer of the defence department to the Indians in the midst of the war would adversely affect the efficient conduct of the war. Hence, most leaders including Nehru and Azad had to fall in line with Gandhi. How agonizing this change was had been stated by Azad.

*I reached Wardha on 5th July and Gandhiji spoke to me for the first time about the Quit India Movement. I could not easily adjust my mind to this new idea...I felt that we must refrain from any word or action which could offer encouragement to the Japanese. It seemed to me that the only thing we could do was to wait upon the course of events and watch how the war situation developed. Gandhiji did not agree. He insisted.. that the British must leave India. If the British agreed, we could then tell the Japanese that they should not advance any further. If in spite of this they advanced, it would be an attack on India and not on the British. If such a situation developed we must oppose Japan with all our might. I have already said that I had been in favour of organized opposition to the British at the outbreak of the war. Gandhiji had not then agreed with me. Now that he had changed, I found myself in a peculiar position. I could not believe that with enemy on the Indian frontier, the British would tolerate an organized movement of resistance. Gandhiji seemed to have a strange belief that they would. He held that the British would allow him to develop his movement in his own way. When I pressed him to tell us what exactly would be the programme of resistance, he had no clear idea. The only thing he mentioned during our discussions was that*

unlike previous occasions, this time the people would not court imprisonment voluntarily. They should resist arrest and submit to the government only if physically forced to do so.

Gandhiji held that the British would regard his move for an organized mass movement as a warning and not take any precipitate action. He would therefore have time to work out the details of the movement and develop its tempo according to his plans. I was convinced that this would not be the case.

Gandhiji's idea seemed to be that since the war was on the Indian frontier, the British would come to terms with the Congress as soon as the movement was launched. Even if this did not take place, he believed that the British would hesitate to take any drastic steps with the Japanese knocking at India's doors. He thought that this would give the Congress the time and opportunity to organize an effective movement. My own reading was completely different.

Our discussions started on 5th July continued for several days. We began to discuss in greater detail the various elements of the proposed movement. Gandhiji made it clear that like other movements, this would also be on the basis of non-violence. All methods short of violence would however be permissible. During the discussions, Jawaharlal said that what Gandhiji had in view was in fact an open rebellion, even if the rebellion was non-violent. Gandhiji liked the phrase and spoke of an open non-violent revolution several times.<sup>1</sup>

This rather long passage is quoted here to show the depth of the crisis of thinking the Congress was caught in before the Quit India resolution was adopted. The strategy of Nehru and Azad of bringing pressure on Britain with the assistance of the US and China had failed. If, in place of it, Gandhi's strategy was to be adopted, it would create an atmosphere for the successful advance of the hatred Fascist Axis forces. On one side, the adamant attitude of the British and, on the other, the popular urge to force the British to quit India even with the assistance of the Fascist Axis forces, Bose and his colleagues in between the two trying to enter India.

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<sup>1</sup> Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Orient Longman, 1959, pp. 73-74

along with the Japanese army—how to face all these simultaneously? Finally Nehru and Azad surrendered to Gandhi.

There was another prominent Congress leader. Rajagopalachari who, as indicated earlier, had deviated from the Gandhian path more than once and trodden his own. Once again he came out with his own views and proposed that the Congress should be courageous enough to concede the Muslim League's demand (for Pakistan) and revive the Congress ministries in the provinces got two resolutions incorporating his proposals adopted by the Congress Legislature Party of Madras Presidency. He also presented One of these resolutions before the AICC, which was, however rejected with a large majority of votes. Not only that the AICC adopted a counter-resolution declaring that "any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the different States and Provinces and the country as a whole, and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal".

As soon as the result of the voting on the resolution was made known, Rajagopalachari announced that he would campaign for his views in his province (Madras). He resigned from the primary membership of the Congress, as well as his membership in the Madras Legislative Assembly following the directive of the Parliamentary Party. (He had already resigned from the Working Committee earlier.)

Rajagopalachari's actions failed to create any impact either in his province or in the Congress. Although he was occupying a high Position in the Congress, he was swimming against the current of Popular sentiments. The masses were angry over the series of defeats inflicted on Britain and other Allied Powers in Europe and over Britain's obstinacy in holding on to power in India even in the humiliating conditions created by these defeats. Bose and Gandhi were giving shape to this popular anger in two distinct paths. Although Nehru and Azad did not agree with their policies, they had to take account of the popular sentiments and adopt the "Quit India" resolution. They were constrained to launch a mass struggle which might, perhaps, lead to the victory of Japan and



other Fascist forces in the war—a step hard to digest for them from the very beginning.

The passage quoted from Azad makes it obvious that however forcefully and determinedly Gandhi was talking about the 'Quit India' struggle, he was, in fact, groping in darkness. For instance, he did not know where to stop the struggle which he was going to launch. Although he was talking enthusiastically about a mass struggle, he had made no arrangement to carry it out in an organized way. He was operating with a child-like confidence that enough time and facilities would be available and that the rulers would not go in heavily to suppress the struggle. It is doubtful if the world has ever witnessed a mass revolution which has been led so unplanned a way. This is the basic character of the "Quit India" struggle which has been subsequently eulogized so highly. A mass struggle of such a magnitude that has never taken place in Gandhi's entire political life in a political background devoid of a programme of struggle and of an organization to carry it out—this was "Quit India"

This may sound strange. But there is nothing strange in it, for the present struggle, like all the earlier ones, to be launched by Gandhi was not designed to overthrow the British rule relying on the revolutionary potentials of the people, but to create a political atmosphere necessary for reaching a compromise with the rulers. Gandhi had made it clear to Nehru and Azad that he was contemplating to launch Quit India struggle on the calculation that the rulers would be compelled to seek a compromise not long after the launching of the struggle.

### III. The "August Revolution"

On July 14, 1942 the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and adopted a resolution which subsequently became well known as the 'Quit India Resolution'. The Working Committee also decided to convene a meeting of the AICC at Bombay on 7th and 8th August to take a final decision on the resolution.

Nehru and Azad had abandoned their stand and come round to Gandhi's way of thinking even before the Working Committee met. This, however, does not mean that their doubts about the desirability

and consequences of the struggle had been removed. Rather, they came round because there was no alternative left before them in the face of the adamant attitude of the British rulers and also the helplessness of the world leaders. So they simply cast aside all the doubts and joined hands with Gandhi.

Interestingly it was Nehru himself who presented the Quit India resolution at the AICC meeting. Again, it was he who answered the Communists who introduced amendments to the resolution. Gandhi was thus able to rally all sections in the AICC behind himself and get the resolution passed almost unanimously (excepting opposition from Communists).

The AICC adopted the Quit India resolution on 8th August and before dawn of the next day, all Congress leaders who were present in Bombay were arrested and put behind the bars. Simultaneously, Congressmen at the different levels were arrested similarly all over the country. It became evident that the government had a well designed plan to suppress the Quit India struggle launched by the Congress without a plan.

There were indications to show which way the government was moving. Immediately after the Working Committee meeting Gandhi made an attempt to open negotiation which was "part and parcel of his method of struggle". He sent one of his close disciples, Miss Slade alias Mira Ben to the Viceroy to explain to him the resolution of the Working Committee and the form of struggle envisaged therein. But the Viceroy refused her permission to meet making clear that "the government would not tolerate any rebellion during the war, whether it was violent or non-violent" and that it was not prepared "to meet or discuss with any representatives of an organization which spoke in such terms".

Besides, on 17th July (three days after the meeting of the Working Committee), Gandhi had obtained a copy of the circular sent by the Secretary of the Publicity Department of the Government of India to the provincial governments, to which Gandhi had referred in his speech at the Bombay AICC meeting. Thus, the Congress had received the warning that the government was getting ready to face the struggle it was going to launch. Since the Publicity Department had issued such a circular, it could well be imagined

that other departments also must have made similar arrangements to face the situation. But as against it, there was absolutely no preparedness on the part of the Congress. Gandhi never bothered either to save at least a section of the leadership from mass arrest or to create an underground organization functioning continuously in the background of such mass arrest as any party in the world would do while organizing mass revolts against a Government. What is more, he even made it clear in his speech before the Bombay AICC that he was opposed to any such venture and maintained that since the struggle he was visualizing was an 'open mass revolt', there was no room for underground activities and so on and those who indulged in secret activities would land themselves in danger and so forth.

It may be argued that there was nothing strange in it since Gandhi was always opposed to secret activities. He had always maintained that secrete activities were negations of the *satyagraha* programme he had formulated. But as distinct from the struggles conducted under his leadership earlier he now left the participants free without placing any restriction on them. He was not bothered about "violent tendencies" of which he was afraid in each struggle he undertook to lead since 1921. Now his central slogan was 'do or die'. Gandhi gave the direction that in case he and other Congress leaders were arrested, Congressmen at the different levels and the people should take their own initiative to carry on the struggle in whichever way they considered right.

This idea was, in fact, contained in the AICC resolution which stated: "A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India."<sup>2</sup>

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2. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 346.

Gandhi had laid down the condition earlier that every one who participates in the struggle should engage oneself in the implementation of his constructive programme of spinning and weaving *Khadi*. He also used to avoid struggle whenever there was a semblance of "violent tendency" and call off the struggle when there was a minor incident of violence. None of these principles had been adhered to now. He gave unconditional and unlimited freedom to everyone to engage oneself in anti-government activities in whichever way one considered appropriate. That was why Nehru told that what had come from Gandhi now was a call for an "open rebellion", a statement of which Gandhi himself approved.

Nevertheless, the Quit India struggle contained most of the features of the Gandhian method of struggle. As in the case of the earlier struggles, in the present one also large-scale mobilization of the people was designed to solve the problem through negotiations (bargaining) with the authorities. That was why immediately after the meeting of the Working Committee which adopted the Quit India resolution, Gandhi sent Mira Ben to get in touch with the Viceroy. What is more, both the resolutions of the Working Committee adopted on 14th July and the Quit India resolution in August had left the door open for negotiations.

As we have seen, on many an occasion after the outbreak of the war, Gandhi had differed from the majority of the Working Committee on the question whether the Congress should participate in Britain's war efforts-actions which are quite at variance with the Gandhian principle of non-violence. On this issue also Gandhi had gone back on his earlier position. For example, the Working Committee resolution made it clear that the Congress was agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desired, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China and that the interim national government would have no objection in participating in such activities, because the Congress was as much interested as Britain and the Allied Powers in driving out the Japanese aggressors and rescuing China. It must be specifically noted that reference to this was made by way of explaining the background of launching the Quit India struggle in the resolution drafted with the approval of Gandhi.

The Quit India resolution was an appeal to the radical sections in Britain as also the Allied Powers of the U.S., Soviet Union and China. The line of argument was that the Congress was launching upon the struggle reluctantly since the British was not prepared to give up its adamant attitude towards granting India its rights which would prepare the ground for the Congress to mobilize the whole people of India in the war in which these foreign friends were interested. Clearly, this was an approach designed to prepare the ground for negotiations.

The Congress approach was such that it was likely to appear justifiable to any impartial observer in relation to the relationship between the British rulers and their allies and also between the Congress and other political parties and organizations. Gandhi and Azad emphatically stated that the Congress was not demanding the British to leave for the sake of the Congress but for the whole country and that if the British were making use of the claims made by the Muslim League as a trump, they would not mind even if power was transferred to it.

The resolution stated that what was aimed at was "a provisional government formed by the cooperation of the principal parties and groups in the country" and "a constitution of the governance of India acceptable to all sections of the people". Thus, the present struggle was also looked upon as a means to win the demands through bargain.

But as distinct from the earlier struggles, what was contemplated now was a massive struggle by releasing the people to do what they liked. "Leave India in God's hands", Gandhi told the British authorities, "in modern parlance to anarchy." The Congress leaders realized that nothing short of a massive unrestrained struggle which Gandhi did not hesitate to call an "open rebellion" would create conditions for effectively bargaining with the British.

The Congress leaders were aware of the fact that it was dangerous to launch a struggle at a time when the war had reached a critical juncture. And this was specifically mentioned in the AICC resolution. But they gave the call for a struggle facing any possible eventuality that might arise in the circumstances in which Britain had been facing one defeat after another in the war. According to their

calculation, the popular support they might gain through such a struggle would help them to bargain with the authorities at least in the future. They felt that if they surrendered before the adamant attitude of the rulers they would lose whatever popular support they had been able to gain through struggles for several decades.

The British rulers, too, had realized their own weakness. They knew that they would not be able to remain in India for long even if they succeeded in suppressing the Congress for the time being. A noting made by the King of England, George VI, in his diary in July 1942 throws light on this. Quoting Churchill's statement that his colleagues and all parties in the British Parliament were ready to hand over India to the Indians after the war, he wrote that things appeared as if Cripps, the newspapers and the American public opinion together had impressed upon these parties that the continuance of their rule in India was wrong. Thus, neither the British rulers nor the Congress leaders had any doubt that the British would have to leave India handing over power to the Indians not long after the war. The former maintained that their rule should continue without any significant change during the war in order to prosecute the war effectively, while the Congress held that in order to realize the same objective, Indians themselves should wield power in India. This was the difference between the two sides. Each side began to operate on its own stand-point.

The AICC session terminated at night on 8th August 1942 after adopting the Quit India resolution. The slogans like "Freedom or Death" and "Do or Die" reverberated throughout the country. On the same night the government struck hard at the Congress which crumbled as never before. This was what the Congress and Socialists praised as the "August revolution". Was it really a revolution? Let us examine.

There were protest demonstrations following the mass arrests that took place throughout the country and there were police lathi-charges and firing at demonstrations. In many places where such actions took place, the people went into counter-actions against the police and the military. These were what was known as the "August Revolution". Congressmen and Socialists are in the habit of proclaiming proudly that they were the organizers and participants

of that "revolution". They used to denounce the Communists for having refused to participate in it and for opposing it.

But what actually took place during August and September 1942 was not a revolution as they claim; it was only a demonstration of protest against the repression let loose by the government. Neither Gandhi nor other Congress leaders had ever tried to give an organized form to the anti-imperialist feelings spontaneously displayed by the people. On the other hand, the government had a predetermined plan to suppress the struggle within a matter of days.

Thus, the government was able to sweep at one stroke and throw into prison the leaders who were repeating the words "revolution" and "open rebellion" without doing anything necessary to organize that 'revolution'. The advocates of "August Revolution" are, in fact, characterizing this attack of the rulers on the Congress and the national movement as revolutionary attack of the Indian people on the British rulers!

#### **IV. Stages and Organizers of 'Quit India'**

The movement variously called the 'Quit India struggle' and the 'August revolution' began with mass arrests that took place before the dawn of 9th August. As we have seen in the preceding section, neither Gandhi nor other Congress leaders had any idea as to how to organize and lead the struggle. In the words of Nehru: "Neither in public nor in private at the meetings of the Congress Working Committee did he (Gandhi) hint at the nature of action he had in mind, except a one-day general strike. So neither he nor the Congress Working Committee issued any kind of directions, public or private, except that people should be prepared for all developments and should in any event adhere to the policy of peaceful and nonviolent action."<sup>1</sup> But as distinct from earlier struggles in which severe restrictions were imposed on the participants, the general instruction given in the AICC resolution and repeated by Gandhi in his speeches and statements was that "every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide" in the fight against the British rule. People were given a free hand in deciding the mode of the struggle and in forming the fighting organizations. Gandhi and other leaders never knew, nor did they want to know, how the

people would act and against whom they would turn in carrying out the task set before them, they merely declared that what they intended was an "open rebellion" that might follow the release of the fighting spirit of the people.

It was in the background in which this idea had run deep into the people that the mass arrests took place before the dawn of 9th August in a manner that enraged the people. And they expressed their protest against this action by holding huge demonstrations.

It must be noted that the demonstrations held on 9th and 10th August were relatively peaceful. But when these peaceful protest actions by the people were brutally attacked by the government, the people came out to sabotage the railway lines and the post and telegraph services in order to prevent the movement of the police and military forces which were being used to attack the people.

Viewed from the tradition of the Gandhian struggle, this had created a situation which was sufficient for the withdrawal of the struggle. However, neither Gandhi nor the other leaders of Congress deprecated these acts of violence. On the contrary, they attributed the violence on the part of the people to the use of force committed by the authorities on peaceful and non-violent demonstrations. From the prison Gandhi had sent a letter to the Viceroy to this effect.

The government charged that the forms of struggle adopted at the second stage, as distinct from those of the days immediately following the mass arrests, were the result of a planned programme, for which they put the blame on Gandhi and other leaders. In support of this the rulers pointed out that the nature of the sabotage that took place at several places simultaneously was the same. They also pointed out that these acts of sabotage were such that they could be executed only by those who had the necessary expertise in using specialized equipments.

But there was no evidence whatever to suggest that Gandhi or any other member of the Congress Working Committee had ever given any instruction for carrying out sabotage. On the contrary, there was enough evidence to show that they gave the call for this

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3. Quoted in R.C. Majumda, *History and Culture of the Indian people*, Vol 11, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969, p. 656



'mass rebellion' without giving any clear instruction on the conduct of the struggle and without creating an organization for that purpose. This, however, does not mean that the Congress leaders were free from the responsibilities for the forms of struggle employed following the incidents that took place on 9th August, including the acts of sabotage. For they had openly given the general direction to the people to express their discontent and anguish towards the British rule by adopting any means which each one of them considered appropriate. What happened throughout the country after the mass arrests was that they carried out this direction in its literal sense. The people considered it their duty to paralyze the oppressive rule which unleashed cruel repression on the peaceful protest demonstrations in the initial stage of the struggle.

Among the people who were thus agitated, there were also experts in technical matters. They dedicated their expertise to the Quit India struggle and trained others in such acts as removing railway tracks, damaging bridges, destroying government office buildings, post and telegraph services, and so on. Thus acts of sabotage of different kinds and forms took place extensively as part of the expression of their protest without any specific direction from above.

A certain development took place in the meantime which gave these unorganized activities an organized character. There were some leaders at the provincial level and below who had escaped arrest on 9th August. They and certain others like Jayaprakash Narayan who having escaped from prison formed a secret organization of the Congress and started sending circulars to provincial Congress committees as "AICC directives". Similar secret organizations came into being in many provinces. Illegal printing presses and publications, short time radio broadcasting stations, etc., also began to function. Collecting fire arms, teaching and learning bomb making, conducting sabotage making use of explosives and such other activities started in an organized manner. With all this, the "Quit India struggle" acquired an organized character with an underground leadership centralized at least at the provincial and local levels.

As a result of these activities, the government machinery became

completely paralyzed at least in some areas and secret mass movements which can rightly be called "parallel governments" emerged. Such parallel governments were formed and started functioning in Ballia in U.P., Bhagalpur and other places in Bihar, Midnapore in Bengal and in Satara in Maharashtra. Although these movements were shattered before long in the face of attacks by the authorities, they constituted an important development that took place as part of the Quit India struggle in the different parts of the country.

Both the British rulers and the liberal politicians blamed the top leaders of the Congress and Gandhi for this situation. That this charge was unfounded is clear from the unplanned character of the struggle visualized by the Congress. For, the Congress leadership had never sent out any directive with regard to the struggle. Besides, it would be clear to anyone that if the Congress had really intended to carry out such programmes as sabotage and setting up parallel governments, they could have organized them in much wider a scale than what had happened in the weeks following 9th August. The fact that these were confined to a few places and lasted for a short duration makes it evident that the organizers of the activities enjoyed much less organized popular support than the central Congress leadership.

However, it is significant to note that neither Gandhi nor other Congress leaders came forward to deplore the sabotage, parallel governments and other activities organized in the name of the Quit India struggle. On the contrary, they characterized the organizers of the struggle who adopted the means which were contrary to the Gandhian non-violence as patriots who carried out the call given by them. Furthermore, they sought to justify the Quit India struggle which, in effect, was violent and to own it entirely to themselves on the pretext that it was the British rulers who forced the agitators to adopt the means unacceptable to the Congress.

It still remains a riddle as to what Gandhi and other Congress leaders would have done, had they not been arrested en masse before the dawn of 9th August. Suppose that the Congress leaders and the people in certain places adopted means of struggles deviating from the Gandhian creed of non-violence which was reiterated in

the Quit India resolution. Would Gandhi have disowned such means of struggle? If the answer is in the positive, would it not be a repudiation of the quit India resolution and the statements he had made earlier? If the answer is in the negative, would it not give room for the interpretation that he led a mass struggle throwing overboard his own method of non-violence for the first time in his long life?

Fortunately for Gandhi and other Congress leaders there was no occasion for these questions to be raised. They became free from the responsibility of deciding the form of the struggle which they themselves called for. They could easily maintain that the incident of violence developed because they were behind the bars. At the same time, since there were leaders outside the jail who had the capacity as well as the willingness to carry out the struggle in an organized way, the programme of struggle which caused extreme difficulties to the government were carried out under their leadership. This provided opportunity to Gandhi and other Congress leaders both to shrug off the responsibility for the consequences of the actions organized by this group of leaders and to own to themselves the gain of the 'August revolution' at the same time. As we shall see in the later chapters, they did utilize this opportunity effectively during the years 1945-46.

Prominent among those who organized the underground activities and gave the Quit India struggle an organized character after the first stage of the struggle were Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia and Aruna Asaf Ali. Although they functioned on behalf of the Congress, they were socialists. They declared that they stood for a people's armed revolt, rather than adhering to the principle of nonviolence contained in the Quit India resolution. They sharply criticized the Congress leaders for giving a call for a country-wide popular revolt without chalking out a programme of action or creating an organization for that purpose. These leaders who created the impression that they were effectively carrying out the struggle through underground organizations, were in a sense organizing the rank and file of the Congress against the leadership.

This enhanced the popularity of the socialists. People felt that although Gandhi and the Congress leaders had called for the struggle,

it was the socialists who were carrying out the struggle in practice. Jay a prakash, Lohia and Mrs Asaf Ali came to be revered by the people.

However, this impression did not last long. The people knew that although it was the socialists who created the necessary organization for the struggle and gave leadership to it, the actual call for the struggle came from Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress and that the former only helped to carry out the call given by the latter. Their level of consciousness was such that they thought that it was perhaps a minor error on the part of the Congress leadership, which, of course, could be corrected and that the leaders of the struggle, at any rate, were the top Congress leaders including Gandhi. In other words, the feeling they had towards Jayaprakash, Lohia, Aruna and other leaders were secondary to their reverence to Gandhi and other Congress leaders.

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